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THE

RÁMÁYANA OF TULSI DÁS.

TRANSLATED BY

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BOOK II.

AYODHYÁ.

"The works of the celebrated Tulsi Dás exercise more influence upon the great body of the Hindu population than the whole voluminous series of Sanskrit compositions."

WILSON.

ALLAHABAD:

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TO THE READER.

THE second book of the "Rámáyana" is more generally read than any other part of the poem, and is the most admired by Hindu critics. The description of king Dasarath's death and the different leave-takings are quoted as models of the pathetic, and in a public recital there is scarcely one in the audience who will not be moved to tears. The sentiments that the poet depicts, and the figures that he employs to illustrate them, appeal with irresistible force to the Hindu imagination; and, if for no other reason than this, they would be interesting to the English student for the insight they afford into the traditional sympathies and antipathies of the people. The constant repetition of a few stereotyped phrases, such as 'lotus feet,' 'streaming eyes,' and 'quivering[1] frame,' though they find a parallel in the stock epithets of the Homeric poems, are irritating to modern European taste; while the curiously artificial similes derived from the frequently fabulous habits of different birds and plants, which like the oft-repeated refrain of a popular song never fail to elicit the applause of an appreciative audience, only repel a foreigner as frigid and unmeaning conventionalities. Such are the allusions to the lotus, that expands in the day and closes at evening; the lily, that blossoms in the night and fades at sunrise; the rice crop, that luxuriates in the rain, and the *jawása* plant that is killed by it; the *chakwá*, that mourns its mate all through the hours of darkness; the *chakor*, that is never happy, except when gazing upon the moon; the *chátak*, that patiently endures all the buffeting of the storm in the confident expectation that the cloud will at last let fall the one auspicious drop for which it thirsts; the swan, that knows how to separate milk from the water with which it has been mixed; and the snake, that carries a precious jewel in

[1]The word *pulak*, which I generally translate by 'quivering' or 'throbbing,' means strictly the bristling of the hair upon the body, which is a sign of violent mental agitation. The Munshi with whom I read in Calcutta some seventeen years ago always, I remember, rendered it by 'horripilation,' a frightful word, which would destroy all the poetic effect of the most impressive passage, but which he greatly admired on account of its six syllables.

its head, of which it is always afraid of being robbed. In spite of these drawbacks, there are many passages instinct with a genuine poetic feeling, which appeals to universal humanity, and which it is hoped will be dimly recognized even through the ineffectual medium of a prose translation.

The characters also of the principal actors in the drama are clearly and consistently drawn; and all may admire, though they refuse to worship, the piety and unselfishness of Bharat, the enthusiasm and high courage of Lakshman, the affectionate devotion of Sita, that paragon of all wife-like virtues, and the magnanimity of Ráma, the model son, husband, and brother, 'the guileless king, high, self-contained, and passionless,' the Arthur of Indian chivalry.

At the outset I was under the impression that in this Book, as also in the First, there was no one in the field before me; but before I had made any very great progress, I discovered that I was in error, and that there was already in existence an English version, published in 1871, by Adálat Khán, a Muhammadan Munshi of the College of Fort William in Calcutta. I at once procured a copy of it, and it is only proper to acknowledge that it has been of considerable assistance to me. It does not, however, encroach very largely upon the ground that I had intended to occupy. The Munshi appears to have written solely with a view to lighten the labours of his own pupils and of others who like them were preparing for a special examination. Despite not a few misapprehensions of the sense, such persons will probably find it quite as useful for their purpose as my translation, if not more so. But in the attempt to secure literal accuracy, and also no doubt from the fact that English was not the mother-tongue of the translator, the language employed is throughout so curiously unidiomatic that in many places it is absolutely unintelligible without a reference to the original, and this the general reader would not be in a position to make. As a specimen I give the *chaupái* following *dohá* 224:—

"If he leaves me, knowing my mind wicked, and receives me, considering his servant, my sheltering-place then will be in the shoes of Ráma: he is my good master, but the fault is in this servant. The *chátak* and the fish deserve

the praise of the world ; they are sincere in their usual vow and love. Thus having reflected in his mind, he went along the road, ashamed and overpowered with love. The sin committed by his mother was as if keeping him back ; but the Bull of patience was walking by the power of his faith, and when he knew the nature of Ráma, his feet fell on the ground hurriedly. The state of Bharat at that time was such as that of the bee in a current of water. Seeing the grief and love of Bharat, the pilot became stupefied at that moment."

As may be readily imagined, such a translation as that, of which the above passage is a fair specimen, though useful in allowing me to take a rapid view of the context, was not a very trustworthy guide on any point of real difficulty, though the translator states that he consulted not a few Pandits. I have, however, been able to rely with much confidence upon the explanations given in the Hindi commentary published under the auspices of the Mahárájá of Benares, who has himself an unequalled knowledge of the poem and has made it a special and life-long study. I very much regret that it has not been carried beyond the second book ; for here in Bulandshahr there is no Pandit to whom I can make an oral reference from time to time as the occasion arises. Consequently I see no immediate prospect of being able to complete my translation ; for it would be very unwise of any Englishman, however familiar with the general characteristics of Hindi poetry and Tulsi Dás's own peculiarities of style, to undertake so difficult and important a task in absolute dependence on his own unaided resources. The two first books, which together make up more than half the entire poem, have now been presented to the English public ; the second half of the work must be indefinitely postponed.

F. S. GROWSE.

BULANDSHAHR :
July 25, 1878.

NOTICES OF BOOK I.

"This is undoubtedly a valuable addition to Anglo-Indian literature. It opens a new mine of riches to European scholars. The translation is very faithful, literal, and animated. Mr. Growse, unlike other translators, has to a great extent preserved the spirit of the original. His prose sometimes reads like poetry. His command of the English language is so great that he expresses in simple language all shades of Indian thought, paying particular attention at the same time to English idiom. We would strongly recommend the replacement of some of the books now fixed for the high proficiency examination in Hindi by the Rámáyana of Tulsi Dás, Book I. Mr. Growse deserves the more credit for his work as the greater part of it was written in camp without any books of reference. He has thoroughly entered into the spirit of Tulsi Dás, and has very agreeably succeeded in painting him in a foreign language to the best advantage that we could have wished. He has very rarely left out phrases, or introduced others of his own. We have carefully gone through the first half, the most difficult part of the translation, and with the exception of a few solitary passages we have not met but faithful translation. .... If space allowed, we could give extracts to show the scholarlike manner in which Mr. Growse has rendered some of the most abstruse religious thoughts of the Hindus into idiomatic and simple English."—*Indian Tribune.*

"We heartily welcome this translation. So far as we have been able to compare passages of it with the original, we have found them to be very faithful and accurate renderings. Though the style adopted by the translator is prose, which affords facility for a closer adherence to the original than verse would have done, yet it has a graceful rhythmical flow. Its idiom moreover is pure English. It seems impossible for the reader to help feeling himself transported into the fairy land of oriental poetry. The chief value of the work, however, is that it will assist Englishmen to become acquainted with the popular epic of the vast mass of Hindus, and thus enter into their loftiest feelings. Mr. Growse has in a well written introduction enhanced the value of the translation by tracing the history of the poem and of its author. We trust the public will show such an appreciation of this first instalment of the epic in an English dress as to encourage Mr. Growse in the task of completing the remainder."—*The Aryan.*

"We gladly welcome this first instalment of an excellent version of the most popular of Hindi poems .... Of Tulsi Dás himself little is known, but what information is available has been collected by Mr. Growse in his introduction ..... The translation appears to be executed in a scholarly style, and is carefully edited throughout with footnotes explanatory of the mythological allusions. While thanking the translator for this instalment of so important a work, we trust he will be encouraged to hasten the completion of it."—*Indian Antiquary.*

"That the poem itself has been well and worthily translated is sufficiently vouched for by Mr. Growse's high reputation as a Sanskrit and Hindi scholar; while his devout enthusiasm as an antiquarian makes him enter into his work with a zest which redeems it from much of the dryness which one ordinarily finds in philological labours. He has done all that could be done, consistently with a conscientious adherence to the text, to leaven the inert mass of Tulsi Dás's verses. He even tries to ennoble the silly legends of Hindu mythology by the occasional use of that Christian phraseology which throws so great a charm over the mediæval sacred lore of Europe ..... We cannot understand how any man can live in this country and not be touched by what he sees among the natives, especially the Hindus. To single out whatever seems to us grotesque and unreasonable in their religious system, and to ignore the deep religious feeling that underlies these flaws, is surely ungenerous and prejudiced. The Hindu desire of eternal life; the acknowledgment of man's sinfulness; the efficacy of atonement for sin; their inveterate idea of a divine incarnation; the merits of sacrifice should not be ignored, while all that is ludicrous and hideous in the religion of the Hindu people is put forward as its unredeeming feature .... Now we should consider it a libel on Mr. Growse to say that he aims at reconciling Hinduism with Christianity; we should moreover speak against our convictions did we say so. What we find fault with him for is that he *appears* to place Christianity and the Hindu religious system on an equal footing ..... The term 'saint' is so identified in our mind with canonization that we must confess it makes us wince when we hear it applied to persons whom, rightly or wrongly, we suppose to be myths. It has never, we believe, been applied to the deities of Western mythology."—*Indo-European Correspondence.*

The editor of the *Indo-European* was kind enough to admit into his columns my reply to his criticisms, as follows:—"As Tulsi Dás believed Ráma to be the incarnate God, the invocation of his name appears to me as reasonable as the similar invocation by a Christian. Hindus are not great historical critics. He had never examined the documentary evidences of Ráma's divinity, but accepted it as a fact, in the same way as most Catholics accept the facts of the Gospels. Never having heard of Christ, and yet believing in the doctrine of the Incarnation, he worshipped with the worship due to Christ the most perfect ideal of humanity that India has even seen; and with St. Thomas Aquinas I would fain believe of him that he was a Christian by the baptism of desire, *viz.*, the grace to will to obtain salvation by fulfilling the commandments of God, even though from invincible ignorance he knew not the true church. As for the term 'saint,' you say it has never been applied to the deities of Western mythology: to which I will add, nor to the *deities* of Indian mythology. But there is not the slightest reason to doubt that Ráma was a real character, and that Visvamitra was a great sage, a philosopher, or a man of high reputed sanctity, by whatever name you may prefer to designate him, who was Ráma's contemporary. It is to him that the word *muni*, which I translate 'saint,' is

applied. To show that I am not singular in so translating it, I will turn it up in all the dictionaries I have in the house. Monier Williams in his Sanskrit Dictionary gives *Muni*, 'an inspired saint; a holy man endowed with divine inspiration, or one who has attained more or less of a divine nature; one given to mortification and abstraction.' Forbes in his Hindustani Dictionary gives *Muni*, 'a holy man, a saint, a sage.' And Benfey in his Sanskrit Dictionary, *Muni*, a holy sage endowed with divine inspiration, an ascetic; in the feminine, a female saint."—*Indo-European Correspondence.*

"Mr. Blochmann said he was much struck with a passage in Mr. Growse's translation; it was an additional proof that religious thought repeats itself, and that it was not difficult to cull passages from Hindu works that bear the most striking similarity to passages of the New Testament, though the authors could not be supposed to have been acquainted with Jewish or Christian writings. He hoped that Mr. Growse would have leisure and strength to complete the great—he might say, national—work which he had commenced. Mr. Growse was well known both for the extent of his researches in Hindi folk-lore and philology, and for the classical taste that pervades his translations, and there was no one better qualified to bring out a faithful and truly readable version of Tulsi Dás's Rámáyana."—*Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*

"I have read the book with very great interest. The language of Tulsi Dás is so difficult that even most of the Pandits in Hindustan can understand little of many passages in his books, especially in the Rámáyana, almost all sentences of which, besides allegory or other figure, have a number of colloquial Hindi words. Such being the case, an English translation must have been wanted by English readers; but now the author has done it beyond expectation. The version is quite literal and in easy style; and nothing difficult or figurative in the original text is omitted. So, after comparing the version with the original, I expect that this will assist not only English readers of the Rámáyana, but the Pandits also who have to teach English scholars."—*Opinion of Pandit Guru Prasid, Head Pandit of the Oriental College, Lahore (received through Dr. Leitner).*

"The Hindi Rámáyana is doubly valuable. It is in the first place a key to the living creed of the modern Hindu who does not know Sanskrit. Secondly, it is in a style of transition, like our Elizabethan English, which shows the scholar and the etymologist what the language was three centuries back, as it passed from the Prákrit of the Suraseni to the modern speech. This is the work to the translation of which Mr. F. S. Growse has recently addressed himself; and the first book of his excellent translation (the first that has been made) is now before the public. .... The reputation of the translator for accuracy of knowledge and skill is a sufficient guarantee that none who use it will be disappointed."—*Pioneer.*

CORRIGENDA TO BOOK I.

Page 2, line 21, for 'enriches it with all the virtues of the master,' read 'gives it the mastery over every virtue.'

„ 2, line 1 of note, after 'Nárâyan,' insert 'Siva.'

„ 9, last line but one, for 'when you apply sandal, &c.,' read 'Any wood that comes from the Malaya sandal groves is prized; who looks to see what kind of wood it is?'

„ 10, line 17, before 'pearl' insert 'lovely.'

„ 16, for *dohá* 23 read thus: 'Devotion to Ráma is for the faithful Tulsi Dás, like the rainy season for the rice-fields; but the two glorious consonants in Ráma's name are like the months of Sáwan and Bhádon.'

„ 16, last line but one, for 'or' read 'and;' the allusion being to the form the two letters *r* and *m* take when written above the line.

„ 24, line 1, the words rendered 'my heart fixed on Hari's messenger' may also mean 'with a heart as given to me by Hari.'

„ 35, read *dohá* 61 as a question, 'What! the omnipresent, &c., has he taken the form of a man?' and omit the word 'but' from the beginning of the next *chaupái*.

„ 36, line 12, for 'reverend' read 'reverent.'

„ 46, line 19, after 'Sambhu destroys it' insert 'By the virtue of penance the great serpent supports the burden of the earth.'

„ 50, line 15, for 'love is governed by caprice' read 'the heart thinks only of the one it loves.'

„ 63, line 7 from bottom, after 'delectable history' insert 'of Sambhu's doings.'

„ 72, line 10 from bottom, for 'differing one from another' read 'each more wonderful than the other.'

„ 77, *dohá* 138, after 'I must' insert 'on this occasion.'

„ 77, line 6 from bottom, after 'harm him' insert 'mark me, holy ascetic' and strike out the words 'O suffering saint.'

„ 79, line 13, for 'in form as' read 'and.'

„ 114, line 4: to 'mark of the Brahman's foot' add this note: Ráma is here identified with Vishnu, of whom the following legend is told in the *Bhágavat Purâna*:—The patriarch Bhrigu, being in doubt which of the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, was the greatest, determined to put the matter to the test. He first went to Brahma and entered his court without making any obeisance, an affront at which the god showed himself exceedingly indignant. He then went to Siva and, treating him with a like want of respect, excited a yet more furious storm of passion. Lastly he went to Vaikunth, where finding Vishnu asleep in the embraces of his spouse Lakshmi, he struck him roughly on the breast with his foot to awaken him. The god started up, but seeing the saint, at once prostrated himself before him, and took and gently rubbed his foot with his hands, hoping it had not been hurt by striking against him. Thus Bhrigu learnt that in mercy and magnanimity, the highest attributes of the godhead, there was no other power that could be compared to Vishnu.

THE RÁMÁYANA
OF
TULSI DÁS.

BOOK II.
AYODHYÁ.

Sanskrit Invocation.

MAY he, on whose left side shines resplendent the daughter of the mountain-king ; on whose head is the river of the gods ; on whose brow the crescent moon, on whose throat the poison-stain, on whose breast a huge snake ; and whose adornments are streaks of ashes ; the chief of divinities, the eternal lord of all, the complete, the omnipresent, the moon-like Siva, the holy Sankara ; may he protect me. May he, who neither rejoiced when anointed king, nor was saddened by painful exile in the woods ; the holy son of Raghu of the lotus face ; may he ever vouchsafe to me success and prosperity. Him I adore, with his body dark and soft as the lotus, with Síta enthroned on his left side, with graceful bow and arrows in hand, even Ráma, the lord of the race of Raghu.

Dohá 1.

Cleansing the mirror of my soul with the sand from the lotus feet of the holy *guru*, I sing Ráma's spotless fame, the giver of all good things.

Chaupái.

From the time that Ráma returned home with his bride, there was a constant succession of joys and delights. The fourteen spheres were like the great mountains, where clouds of virtue fall in showers of happiness ; wealth, affluence, and prosperity were bounteous rivers, which overflowed into Avadh as into the ocean ; while the noble citizens, men and women alike, were its brilliant pearls, all precious and of perfect beauty. The magnificence of the capital was beyond description, it seemed the *chef d'œuvre* of the creator.

Gazing on Rámchandra's moon-like face, the people were perfectly happy ; the queens and all their attendants were enraptured to see their heart's desire bear fruit ; and still more enraptured was the king, as he heard tell and saw for himself Ráma's beauty and accomplishments and amiability.

Dohá 2.

In every heart was one desire, which they expressed in their prayers to Mahádeo : " O that the king in his own lifetime would entrust Ráma with the regency."

Chaupái.

One day the monarch sat enthroned in court with all his nobles. Himself the incarnation of every virtue, he was delighted beyond measure to hear of Ráma's renown. All kings were solicitous for his patronage, and the very gods desired his friendship. No man so blest as Dasarath in the three spheres of the universe, or in all time—past, present, or to come. Words fail to describe his blessedness, who had for his son Ráma, the source of every bliss. The king happened to take a mirror in his hand, and looking at his face in it set his crown straight. Close to his ear was a white hair, like old age whispering " O king, make Ráma regent, and thus accomplish the purpose of your life."

Dohá 3.

Having thus considered and settled it in his mind, the king on an auspicious day and at a fitting time, his body quivering with emotion and his soul full of joy, went and declared his purpose to his *guru.*

Chaupái.

Said the king : " Hearken, great saint ; Ráma is now perfect in every accomplishment. Servants, ministers, the whole body of citizens, whether my enemies, or friends, or indifferent to me, all hold Ráma as dear as even I do, and regard him as god's blessing incarnate. The Bráhmans and their families, reverend sir, have the same love for him as you have. They, who put on their head the dust from the feet of their spiritual father, obtain as it were the mastery over all dominion. There is no man my equal, but all

that I have flows from the worship of your holy feet. I have now a desire at heart; it can only be accomplished, my lord, by your good favour." The saint was pleased to witness his sincere devotion and said: "O king, give me your commands.

Dohá 4.

"Your name and glory, sire, provide for every wish; on every desire of your soul, O jewel of kings, success follows naturally."

Chaupái.

Perceiving that the *guru* was thoroughly pleased at heart, the king replied smilingly and in gentle tones: "My lord, invest Ráma with regal powers; be pleased to direct that the council be convened. Let this happy event take place in my lifetime, that the eyes of all people may be gladdened by the sight. By my lord's blessing Siva has brought everything happily to pass, but I have still this one desire at heart. It will then be a matter of no concern whether I remain in the body or depart hence, if I have nothing on this score whereof to repent." When the saint heard Dasarath's noble words, he experienced the greatest delight: "Hearken, O king; the lord whose averted face all creatures lament, and to whom one must pray for removal of all distress, has been born your son, even the holy and compassionate Ráma.

Dohá 5.

"Quick, O king, let there be no delay, gather together all your council: happy and auspicious indeed the day when Ráma is proclaimed regent."

Chaupái.

The glad king proceeded to the palace and summoned his servant, the minister Sumanta. He bowed the head crying 'All hail,' and the king then declared to him the glad news: "To-day to my great joy the *guru* has charged me to install Ráma as heir to the throne. If the proposal seems good to the council, prepare with gladness to impress the royal mark on Ráma's brow." The minister was rejoiced to hear these gracious words, which fell like a shower of rain on the young plant of his desire. With clasped hands he made his petition: "O lord of the world, live for ever,

the deed you propose is good and beneficent ; haste, my lord, let us have no delay." The king was delighted by his minister's assent, like a creeper that spreads apace when it has once clasped a strong bough.

Dohá 6.

Said the king: "Whatever orders the saint may give with regard to Ráma's coronation, see that you perform with all speed."

Chaupái.

In gentle accents the glad saint spoke and said : "Bring water from all holy places, and all kinds of herbs, roots, fruits, and flowers (enumerating by name every auspicious variety), with *chauries* of different sizes and apparel of all sorts, both of wool and silk, and every other material, with jewels and all the auspicious things that there are in the world, that are fit for a king's installation." Then after repeating all the forms prescribed in the Veda, he said : "Erect in the city a number of pavilions, and plant the streets in every quarter with fruit-bearing mangoes and trees of betel-nut and plantains, and fashion bright and beautiful jewelled squares, and have all the bazars speedily decorated, and do reverence to Ganes and your *guru* and your family god, and diligently serve the Bráhmans.

Dohá 7.

Make ready flags and banners and wreaths and vases, horses too, and chariots and elephants." All were obedient to the holy sage's words and busied themselves each in his own special work.

Chaupái.

Whatever the order that any one had been given by the saint, that he regarded as the very first thing to be done. The king worships Bráhmans, saints and gods, and does everything to promote Ráma's prosperity. On hearing the glad news of Ráma's installation, all Avadh resounded with songs of jubilee. Good omens declared themselves in the body, both of Ráma and Síta, by a sudden quiver of the lucky side, and they said affectionately to one another : "This betokens Bharat's return. We have greatly missed him for many a long day. This good sign assures us of a friend's approach, and in the whole world there is no friend so dear to us

as Bharat; this good omen can have but one meaning." Every day Ráma is as lovingly anxious about his brother as a turtle for its eggs in the sand far away.

Dohá 8.

At that time the ladies of the court were as delighted to hear these most glad tidings, as the waves of ocean swell with joy on beholding the moon in its glory.

Chaupái.

First they took care that those who brought the news were richly guerdoned with jewels and robes; then with a body all quivering with emotion and soul full of love, they proceeded to make all festal preparations. Sumitrá filled in a lovely square with exquisite gems of every kind; Ráma's mother, drowned in joy, sent for a crowd of Bráhmans and loaded them with gifts; then worshipped the local divinity and the gods and the serpents, and vowed them future sacrifices, praying: "In your mercy, grant me this boon, that Ráma prosper." Auspicious strains are chanted by moon-faced, fawn-eyed damsels, with voice sweet as that of the *koil.*

Dohá 9.

On hearing of Ráma's installation, all good women were glad of heart and began diligently to make festal preparations, thinking god to be gracious to them.

Chaupái.

Then the monarch summoned Vasishtha and sent him to Ráma's apartments to inform him of the coming event. When Raghunáth heard of the *guru's* approach, he came to the door and bowed his head at his feet, and after reverently sprinkling lustral water, conducted him in, and paid him honour in the sixteen[1] prescribed

[1]The 16 modes of showing honour are as follows: 1 *ásan*, a seat; 2 *argha*, lustral water; 3 *pádya*, water for the feet; 4 *snán*, a bath; 5 *áchaman*, water for rinsing the mouth; 6 *gandhákshat*, perfumes, and rice, the former only being offered to Vishnú, the latter to Mahádev; 7 *vastra*, raiment; 8 *dhúp*, incense; 9 *dip*, lights; 10 *naivedya*, temple offerings; 11 *mukha-hasta-jal*, water for the face and hands; 12 *támbúla*, betel-leaf; 13 *púga-phal*, betel-nut; 14 *dakshiná*, a gift; 15 *pradakshiná*, circumambulation; and 16 *nirájan*, lustration with camphor. As some of these ceremonies take place at the reception of a guest and some at his departure, they would never be all performed at once. But here, as in many other parallel phrases, a definite number, the highest that could under any circumstances be predicated of the subject, is used to express merely the general idea of completeness.

modes. Then after again with Síta clasping his feet, Ráma thus spoke, with his lotus hands folded in prayer: "For a lord to visit his servant's house is a source of great joy, a cure for all distress; yet it had been more fitting, sir, and more in accordance with custom, had you kindly sent to say you wanted me. Since my lord has graciously waived his prerogative, my house has to-day become highly blest. Let me know, holy father, what are your orders; it is for a servant to do his master's service."

Dohá 10.

On hearing these affectionate words the saint extolled Raghubír: "O Ráma, glory of the solar race, it is like you to speak thus."

Chaupái.

After eulogizing Ráma's high qualifications and amiable character, the great saint with much emotion explained: "The king has prepared for a royal installation, and wishes to confer upon you the dignity of regent. To-day, Ráma, you should devote yourself to practices of devotion, that God may bring the matter to a happy issue." Having thus admonished him, the *guru* returned to the king; while Ráma's heart was all amazement: "My brothers and I were all born together, and together have we ate and slept and played in childhood; the piercing of our ears, the investiture with the sacred thread, our marriage, in short all our rejoicings have taken place together. This is the one flaw in a spotless line that the eldest only should be enthroned without his younger brothers." These gracious regrets on the part of the lord remove all unworthy suspicion from the mind of his votaries.[1]

Dohá 11.

Then came Lakshman, full of love and joy, and with many affectionate speeches did homage to the moon of the lily-like solar race.

Chaupái.

There was a noise of music of every kind, and the delight of the city was beyond description. All prayed for Bharat's return, that he might come quickly and like them enjoy the spectacle. In every

[1] If Ráma had at once and gladly accepted the proffered dignity, it might have been urged by objectors that he had taken an unfair advantage of his brother Bharat's absence.

street and lane and house and market and place of resort, men and women were saying to one another: "When will to-morrow come and the auspicious moment, in which God will accomplish our desire; when, with Síta by his side, Ráma will take his seat on the golden throne, and all our wishes be gratified." They were all saying "When will to-morrow come?" But the envious gods prayed that difficulties might arise; the rejoicings at Avadh pleased them as little as a moonlight night pleases a thief. So they humbly called in Sáradá, and again and again threw themselves at her feet:

Dohá 12.

"O mother, regard our great distress and make haste to relieve it. If Ráma refuses the throne and retires into the forest, all will be well with us."

Chaupái.

On hearing this prayer of the gods, she stood still, thinking sadly: "I am like a winter's night to a bed of lotuses." The gods seeing her hesitate cried yet once more: "O mother, not the least blame will attach to you; for Raghuráo, you know his nature well, is exempt from sorrow as from joy; and (as for his people) they, like all other creatures, have their share in pain or pleasure, under the law of necessity: go therefore to Avadh and befriend us gods." Time after time they clasped her feet till she yielded and went, though still thinking to herself, "the gods are a mean-spirited crew; though they dwell on high, their acts are low, and they cannot endure to see another's prosperity." Again reflecting on the future, that the ablest poets would do her will,[1] she became cheerful of heart and flew to the city of Dasarath, as it were some intolerably inauspicious aspect of the planets.

Dohá 13.

Now Kaikeyi had a wicked handmaid, by name Manthará. Her ideas Sáradá first distorted and made her a very storehouse of meanness and then went her way.

[1]If Ráma goes into exile, his adventures will form an inexhaustible theme for the poets of all time, who will therefore be always invoking my aid and propitiating my good will.

Chaupái.

When Manthará saw the preparations in the city, the joyous festivities, the music and the singing, she asked the people "What mean these rejoicings?" When she heard of Ráma's inauguration, her soul was afire and she plotted, wicked wretch that she was, how that very night to defeat it; like a crafty hill-woman, who has spied a honeycomb hanging from a tree and schemes how to get hold of it. So she went crying to Bharat's mother. "What is wrong now?" the queen smiled and said. She gave no answer, but drew a deep sigh and, like a woman, began shedding a flood of tears. Said the queen laughing: "you are a most impudent girl, and Lakshman, I suspect, has been giving you a lesson." Still the wicked handmaid said not a word, but breathed hard like some venomous serpent.

Dohá 14.

Said the queen with a nervous smile: "Is Ráma not well, or the king, or Bharat, or Lakshman, or Satrughna?" These words tortured the heart of the humpbacked girl.[1]

Chaupái.

"Why, O lady, should any one give me a lesson, and who is there to encourage me in any impudence? With whom again is it well to-day if not with Ráma, whom the king is now associating with himself on the throne? God has been very gracious to Kausalyá; and after seeing her, who else can have any pride left? Why not go and see all the magnificence, the sight of which has so agitated me? Your son is away and you take no heed, making sure of your influence with the king, and not observing his treachery and wiliness, so drowsy are you and so anxious for your bed and pillow. On hearing this affectionate address, the queen—who knew well her froward mind—cried: "Peace, have done. If you speak to me again in this way, you mischief-maker, I will have your tongue pulled out."

Dohá 15.

But remembering that the one-eyed, the lame and the humpbacked are ever vicious and vile, more especially if they be women to boot, and slaves, Bharat's mother smiled and added:

[1]Because the fact that the queen asked first of all about Ráma's welfare, showed her intense love for him.

Chaupái.

"I have only given you kind advice and am not the least bit angry. If what you say is true, it is the best and happiest of days. It has ever been the custom in the solar race that the eldest-born should be the lord, and the younger brothers his servants. If Ráma is really to be crowned to-morrow, ask of me, girl, what you will and I will give it you. There is no difference between Kausalyá and the other royal mothers. Ráma is equally fond of all: in fact he has a special affection for me, as I have often tested. If I am born again, God in his goodness grant that Ráma and Síta be again my son and daughter! Ráma is dearer to me than life; why then should you be troubled at his being crowned king?

Dohá 16.

I abjure you in Bharat's name, tell me the truth without any fraud or concealment; declare to me the reason why you are in distress at such a time of gladness."

Chaupái.

"I have been satisfied once already; have I a second tongue that I should speak again? I deserve to have my head broken on the funeral pile, wretch that I am, since I pain you by my well-meant words. Those who make the false appear true are the people who please you, my lady; while I offend you. Henceforth I too will speak only as my mistress pleases, or else will remain silent day and night. God has given me a deformed body and made me a slave: we must all reap as we have sown and take as we have given. Whoever is king, what do I lose? Shall I cease to be a servant and become a queen? It is only my worthless character that I cannot bear to see your disgrace, and hence I gave utterance to a word or two; but pardon me, mistress, it was a great fault on my part."

Dohá 17.

On hearing these affectionate words, so deep and crafty, the queen, being only a weak-minded woman, and under the influence of a divine delusion, really believed her enemy to be a friend.

Chaupái.

Again and again in kindly terms she questioned her, like a fawn bewitched by the song of a huntress. Her reason veered as fate would have it so; and the slave-girl rejoiced at the success of her scheme. "You ask, but I am afraid to reply, now that you have given me the name of mischief-maker;" thus spoke the malignant star of Avadh, trimming and fashioning her speech in every way to win confidence: "You spoke, O queen, of Síta and Ráma as your friends; and true enough Ráma did love you once, but now those days are past; in time friends become foes. The sun invigorates the lotus, but burns it to ashes if it have no water: the rival queen would tear you up by the root; take care of your garden and hedge it about.

Dohá 18.

Thinking yourself the king's favourite and that he is quite in your power, you notice nothing; but however fair his words, his heart is black: but you are so good-natured.

Chaupái.

Ráma's mother on the contrary is deep and crafty and having found the means has played her own game. The king has sent away Bharat to his grandfather's by her suggestion, and because he is your son; for she said all the other queens are well disposed to me, but Bharat's mother presumes on her influence with her lord. You, lady, are the thorn in Kausalya's side; she is too deep and crafty for you to fathom; the king has greater love for you than for any one else, and like a rival she cannot bear to see it. For her own ends she has worked upon the king and got him to fix a day for Ráma's inauguration. Now Ráma's promotion is a good thing for the family; all are pleased at it, and I too like it well. But I am alarmed when I consider the consequences; heaven make them recoil on her own head!"

Dohá 19.

With innumerable crafty devices she planned her cunning tale, telling story after story of jealous wives, whereby to increase her resentment.

Chaupái.

Overmastered by fate, the queen was persuaded at heart, and adjured her by the love she bore her to speak out. "What is it you would ask? still do you not understand; even the brute beasts know what is good or bad for them. For the last fortnight the preparations have been going on, and it is only to-day that you learn the news from me. I am clothed and fed in your service, and I must therefore speak the truth at any cost. If I invent a word of falsehood, may God repay me for it! Should Ráma be crowned to-morrow, God will have sown you a crop of misfortunes. I draw this line on the ground, O lady, and declare most emphatically that you will be like a fly in a milk-bowl. If you and your son will submit to be servants, you will be able to stay, but on no other conditions.

Dohá 20.

As Kadru tormented Binatá[1] so will Kausalyá treat you: Bharat will be a slave in bonds, under Ráma and Lakshman."

Chaupái.

When she heard these cutting words Kekaya's[2] daughter could say nothing; she was all in a fever for fear; her limbs were bathed with perspiration; and she trembled like a plantain stalk. Then Humpback bit her tongue[3] and with innumerable crafty speeches kept consoling the queen saying 'courage, courage,' till with her ill-teaching she warped her like a seasoned plank, which there is no bending straight.[4] By a turn of fate the vile became

[1]Kadru and Binatá were the two wives of the patriarch Kasyapa, the former being the mother of the serpent race and the latter of the birds. A discussion arose between them regarding the colour of the tail of the horses of the sun, Binatá insisting that it was white, and Kadru that it was black. It was agreed that whichever of the two was proved to be in the wrong should become the servant of the other. Kadru then contrived to fasten one of her black snakes on to the horse's back, and Binatá taking it to be the animal's real tail, admitted herself defeated.

[2]The name of Kaikeyi's father was Asva-pati, but he is often called Kekaya from the country over which he ruled, supposed to be a part of the Panjáb. The Bráhmana of the white Yajur Veda mentions Asva-pati, king of Kekaya, as nearly contemporary with Sitá's father Janak: an interesting fact noted by Prof. Monier Williams.

[3]Meaning probably to remind herself that she must be careful in what she said.

[4]This couplet appears to be an interpolation, as it is said not to be in the Rájápur MS.

a favourite, as though a beautiful flamingo should flatter an ugly crane. "Hearken, Manthará, your words are true; my right eye is always throbbing and every night I have some ill dream; but in my folly I did not tell you. What can I do, friend? I am such an innocent that I cannot myself tell right from left.

Dohá 21.

Up to this day I have never of my own accord done an unkindness to any one: for what offence has heaven all at once put me to such intolerable distress?

Chaupái.

Rather would I go and spend all my days in my father's house than live a servant of a rival wife. Whomever God creates the dependant of an enemy, it is good for him to die rather than live." Many such lamentable speeches did the queen utter, and Humpback, on hearing them, formed a thorough woman's device: "Why speak thus, as though patient of disgrace? Your honour and wedded joy shall yet increase daily, and may he, who has plotted you this misfortune, in the end reap the fruit of it himself! Since your unworthy servant, my lady, first heard the news, I could neither eat by day nor sleep at night. I consulted the astrologers and they declared positively: 'Bharat shall be king, this much is certain.' If, madam, you will only act upon it, I can tell you a way: for the king is under an obligation to you."

Dohá 22.

"I would throw myself into a well if you told me, or even abandon my husband and son. Speak, then: you see how great is my distress: why should I not do what will be for my good?"

Chaupái.

Taking Kaikeyi as a victim for the slaughter, the Humpback whetted the knife of treachery on her heart of stone; and the queen, like a sacrificial beast that nibbles the greensward, saw not the approaching danger. Pleasant to hear, but disastrous in their results, her words were like honey mingled with deadly poison. Says the handmaid: "Do you or do you not, my lady, remember the story you once told me of the two boons promised you by the

king.[1] Ask for them now and relieve your soul: the kingdom for your son, banishment to the woods for Ráma; thus shall you triumph over all your rivals. But ask not till the king has sworn by Ráma, so that he may not go back from his word. If you let this night pass it will be too late; give heed to my words with all your heart."

Dohá 23.

Said the wretch, having fully contrived her abominable design: "Go to the sulking room; make all your arrangements circumspectly, and do not yield too readily."

Chaupái.

The queen thought Humpback her best friend, and again and again extolled her cleverness, saying: "I have no such friend as you in the whole world: I had been swept away by the flood but for your support. To-morrow if God will fulfil my desire I will cherish you, my dear, as the apple of mine eye." Thus lavishing every term of endearment on her handmaid, Kaikeyi went to the dark room; her evil temper like the soil, in which the servant-girl, like the rains, had sown the seed of calamity, which, watered by treachery, took root and sprouted with the two boons as its leaves, and in the end ruin for its fruit. Gathering about her every token of resentment, she undid her reign by her evil counsel. But meanwhile palace and city were given over to rejoicing, for no one knew of these wicked practices.

Dohá 24.

All the citizens in their delight were busied with festive preparations and the royal hall of audience was crowded with a continuous stream of people passing in and out.

Chaupái.

Delighted at the news, not a few of Ráma's boyish friends went to congratulate him, and the Lord, sensible of their affection, received

[1] Aforetime Dasarath had marched into the south to Váijayanta, a city in the Dandaka forest, to wage war against its king Timi-dhwaja, or Sambara, who had revolted against Indra. The battle lasted till night, and Dasarath, wounded and senseless, would have been left for dead on the field, had not Kaikeyi taken him up into her chariot, inserting her own arm in the place of its broken axle-tree, and speedily driven him away out of reach of the enemy. The grateful monarch thus restored to life by his wife's devotion promised to grant her any two boons she might ask; and she had prudently reserved them both till such time as she might require them.

them graciously and politely asked of their welfare. At his permission they roam through the palace discussing his praises: "Is there any one in the whole world so kind and amiable as Raghubír? Whatever future births fate has in store for us, God only grant us this, that we may always be the servants of Síta's lordly spouse: we ask for nothing more." This was the desire of every one in the city: only Kaikeyi's heart was in a flame; for who is not spoiled by evil communications? There is no profit in taking counsel with the vile.

Dohá 25.

At eventide the happy king repaired to Kaikeyi's apartments, as it were Love incarnate visiting Obduracy.

Chaupái.

He was dismayed when he heard of the chamber of wrath and could scarcely put his feet to the ground for fear. He under whose mighty arm the Lord of heaven dwells secure, and upon whose favour all monarchs wait, was in a fever at hearing of an angry woman: see how great is the power of love. The bearers of trident, thunderbolt, and sword are slain by the flowery shafts of Ratí's spouse. Anxiously the king approached his beloved and was terribly distressed to see her condition, lying on the ground in old and coarse attire with all her personal adornments cast away: her wretched appearance according with her wretched design, as if in mourning for her instant widowhood. The king drew near and asked in gentle tones: "Why are you angry, my heart's delight?"

Chhand 1.

"Why so angry, my queen?" and touched her with his hands. She put away her lord and flashed upon him a furious glance like an enraged serpent with her two wishes for its double tongue, and the boons for fangs, spying out a vulnerable point. Under the influence of fate, says Tulsi, the king took it all as one of love's devices.

Soratha 1.

Again and again the king cried: "Tell me the cause of your anger, O beautiful, bright-eyed dame, with voice as melodious as the *koil*, and gait as voluptuous as the elephant.

Chaupái.

"Who is it, my dear, who has vexed you? Who is it with a head to spare and so enamoured of death? Tell me what beggar I should make a king, or what king I should banish from his realm. I could slay even an immortal, were he your enemy; of what account then are any poor worms of men and women? O my love, you know my sentiments and how my eyes ever turn to your face as the partridge to the moon. O my beloved, my life, my son, and everything that I own, my palace, my subjects are all at your disposal. Could I tell you a word of untruth, lady, at least an oath by Ráma must be binding. Ask with a smile whatever you desire; adorn your lovely person with jewels; consider within yourself what an hour of torture this is for me, and at once, my darling, put away this unseemly attire."

Dohá 26.

On hearing this and considering the greatness of the oath, the wicked queen arose with a smile and resumed her royal attire, like a huntress who sets the snare on marking the chase.

Chaupái.

Thinking her reconciled, the king spoke again in soft and winning accents, his whole body quivering with love: "Your heart's desire, lady, has come to pass; there is joy and gladness in every house in the city; to-morrow I give Ráma the rank of Regent; so, my love, make ready for the festival." At the sound of these untoward words she sprung up with a bound, like an overripe gourd that bursts at a touch; with a smile on her lips, but with such secret pain at heart as a thief's wife who dare not cry openly.[1] The king could not penetrate her crafty schemes, for she had been tutored in every villainy by a master; and skilled as he was in statesmanship, the abyss of woman's ways was more than he could fathom. Again she cried with a further show of hypocritical affection and a forced smile in her eyes and on her lips:

[1]On seeing her husband suffer punishment, lest she too should be made to suffer with him. Such at least seems to me the most obvious meaning of the comparison, though some of the Hindu commentators explain it differently.

Dohá 27.

"Ask, ask, indeed ; but tell me, sir, when has it come to giving and taking: you once promised me two boons, and yet I doubt my getting them."

Chaupái.

The king replied with a smile: "I see what you mean, you are very fond of a little quarrel. You kept my promise in reserve and asked for nothing, and, as my way is, I forgot all about it. Do not tax me with the guilt of a lie, but for two requests make four and you shall have them. It is an immemorial rule in the Raghu family to love life rather than break a promise. No number of sins is equal to a lie; in the same way as myriads of *ghunchi* seeds will not make a mountain. Truth is the foundation of all merit and virtue, as the Vedas and Puránas declare and as Manu[1] has expounded. Moreover I have sworn by Ráma, the chief of our house, the perfection of all that is good and amiable." When she had thus bound him to his word, the wicked queen smiled and cried—loosing as it were the bandage from the eyes of her hawk-like plot,

Dohá 28.

the king's desire being as a pleasant forest and the general happiness as a flock of birds, at which as a huntress she sent forth the cruel falcon of her speech—

Chaupái.

"Hear, my beloved, what is the desire of my heart. Grant me for one boon Bharat's installation ; and for the second (I beg with clasped hands, O my lord, accomplish my desire), may Ráma be banished to the woods for 14 years, there to dwell in the penitential garb of a hermit." At these words of the queen the king's heart grew faint, as the *chakwá* is troubled by the rays of the moon ; he

[1]Some manuscripts for *Manu* read *Muni*, "the saints;" but the former may well stand, as the great lawgiver in many passages of his Code insists very strongly on the merit of truth. Thus in VIII. 81-83—"A witness, who states the truth in evidence, obtains a high place in heaven and the greatest reputation on earth: such a statement is held in reverence even by Bráhma himself. By truth a witness is purified from sin; by truth justice is advanced; therefore the truth should be spoken by witnesses of every caste." I have often thought that if these four lines were printed or engraved in bold characters in the Sanskrit original and set up in our courts of justice they might have a wholesome effect.

trembled all over, nor could utter a sound, like a partridge in the wood at the swoop of a falcon ; the mighty monarch was as crest-fallen as a palm-tree struck by lightning ; with his hands to his forehead and closing both his eyes, as it were Grief personified, he began his moan : " My desire, that had blossomed like the tree of paradise, has been stricken and uprooted as it were by an elephant at the time of bearing. Kaikeyi has desolated Avadh and laid the foundation of everlasting calamity.

Dohá 29.

" What a thing to happen at such a time ! I am undone by putting trust in a woman ; as at the time of heavenly reward for penance an ascetic is destroyed by ignorance."

Chaupái.

In this manner the king burned within himself, and the wicked woman, seeing his evil plight, thus began : " What, then, is Bharat not your son too, but a slave even as I am, bought for a price? If my words, thus like arrows, pierce you to the heart, why did you not think before you spoke ? Answer now, say either yes or no, most truthful lord of Raghu's truthful line. Refuse me the boon you erst promised, break your word and be publicly disgraced. When you engaged to grant the boon, you were loud in your praises of truth, imagining no doubt that I should ask for a handful of parched grain. When Sivi,[1] Dadhíchi[2] and Bali[3] made a

[1]King Sivi (or Saivya), the son of Usinara, had already offered 92 great sacrifices, and was hoping to complete the full number of a hundred, a feat which would have exalted him to the highest dignity in heaven ; when Indra, jealous of his own supremacy, determined to prevent him. Himself assuming the form of a hawk and changing Agni, the god of fire, into a dove, he chased it through the air till it flew into the temple and took shelter in Sivi's bosom, who thereupon promised that he would protect it from all harm. The hawk followed close behind and protested that the dove was his lawful spoil, and that it was unjust of the king to rob him of food which he had fairly won, and without which he would die of starvation. The king offered him anything else that he liked to name ; but the hawk would be satisfied with nothing but an equal weight of the king's own flesh. Scales were brought, the dove was put in the one balance, and the monarch began to hack and hew pieces of his own body and cast in the other ; but still the dove weighed heavier. At last, when all had been cut away, and only his bones were left, he threw himself in. The gods then came and restored him to life and bore him off in triumph to heaven.

[2]When Indra and the other gods were hard-pressed by the demon Vritra, Vishnu told them that there was a great saint named Dadhíchi practising penance in the Naimisha forest, and that if he would let them have his bones they could be made into weapons, before which no enemy could stand. Dadhíchi, as soon as he heard what they wanted, at once devoted himself to death, and out of his bones the gods made thunderbolts, with which they won an easy victory.

[3]King Bali, the son of Virochana, had so extended his empire that he had acquired dominion over the three worlds. Indra, to rid himself of so dangerous a

promise, they gave life and wealth to keep their word." Kaikeyi's speech was as stinging as salt applied to a burn.

Dohá 30.

The righteous king took courage and opened his eyes, and beating his head gasped out: "She has pierced me in the most vital part."

Chaupái.

He saw her standing before him burning with passion, as it were Fury's own sword drawn from the sheath, with ill-counsel for its hilt and cruelty for its sharp edge whetted on the Humpback grindstone. The monarch saw her stern and terrible: "She will rob me either of life or honour;" but steeling his heart he cried in suppliant tones that she regarded not: "Bharat and Ráma are as my two eyes. I tell you truly and call Siva as my witness. O my beloved, what is this ill word that you have uttered, destructive of all order, confidence, and affection? I will not fail to despatch a messenger at daybreak, and soon as they hear the news both brothers will come. Then after fixing an auspicious day and making all due preparation I will solemnly confer the kingdom on Bharat.

Dohá 31.

"Ráma has no greed of empire and is devotedly attached to Bharat; I made my plans according to royal usage, thinking only of their respective ages.

Chaupái.

"I swear by Ráma that I tell you true of his mother, that she never said a word to me. I arranged it all without asking you, and this is how my scheme has failed. Put away your displeasure, assume a festal garb; yet a few days and Bharat shall be Regent. There was only one thing that pained me, your second petition, really an unreasonable request. To-day your bosom burns with

rival, applied to Vishnu, who assuming the form of a dwarf, as the son of Kasyapa, appeared before Bali and begged an alms. The king promised to give him whatever he asked. He said he only wanted as much land as he could pace in three steps. This modest request was granted without hesitation; whereupon he at once developed himself into a giant, and with the first stride covered the whole earth, and with the second the heaven. For the third step he planted his foot on Bali's head and crushed him down into the infernal regions, of which he became the sovereign

unwonted fire; is it anger, or do you jest, or is it all really true? Tell me calmly Ráma's offence. Every one says that he is amiability itself. Even you used to praise and caress him, and I am quite perplext at what I now hear. His pleasant ways would charm even an enemy; how then can he have vexed his own mother?

Dohá 32.

"Have done, my beloved, with this, be it raillery or displeasure; make a just and reasonable request, that I may rejoice in the sight of Bharat's installation.

Chaupái.

"Rather might a fish live out of the water, or a wretched serpent live without its head-jewel,—I tell you my true case without any deception—but there is no life for me without Ráma. Consider well, my dear, my prudent wife, my very existence depends upon my seeing Ráma." On hearing this soft speech the wicked woman blazed up like the fire on which has fallen an oblation of *ghi:* "You may devise and carry out any number of plans, but your subterfuges will not avail with me. Either grant my request, or refuse me and be disgraced; I do not want any long discussion. Ráma is good, you too are good and wise, and Ráma's mother, as you have discovered, is also good. The benefit that Kausalya devised for me is the only fruit that I now in turn give her.

Dohá 33.

"At daybreak if Ráma does not assume the hermit's dress and go out into the woods, my death will ensue, O king, and your disgrace; be well assured of this."

Chaupái.

So saying the wretch rose and stood erect, as it were a swollen flood of wrath that had risen in the mountains of sin, turgid with streams of passion, terrible to behold, with the two boons for its banks, her stern obduracy for its current, and her voluble speech for its eddies, overthrowing the king like some tree torn up by the roots, as it rushed on to the ocean of calamity. The king perceived that it was all true, and that death, in fashion as a woman, was dancing in triumph on his head. Humbly he clasped her by the feet

and begged her to be seated, crying: "Be not an axe at the root of the solar race. Demand of me my head and I will give it at once, but do not kill me by the loss of Ráma. Keep Ráma, be it in any way you will, or your heart will be ill at ease all your life long."

Dohá 34.

Seeing that his disease was incurable, the king fell upon the ground and beat his head, sobbing out in most lamentable tones "O Ráma, Ráma."

Chaupái.

The king's whole body was so broken down by distress that he seemed like the tree of paradise that some elephant had uprooted. His throat was dry, speech failed his lips, like some poor fish deprived of water. Again Kaikeyi plied him with biting taunts, infusing as it were poison into his wounds: "If you meant to act thus in the end, what compulsion was there to say ask, ask? Is it possible, sire, to be two things at once? To laugh and jest and at the same time mourn; to be called the munificent, and yet be miserly; to live without anxiety, and yet be a king? Either break your word or show more fortitude; do not, like a woman, appeal to compassion. It is said that life, wife, sons, home, wealth, nay the whole world, all is but as a straw compared to the ocean of truth."

Dohá 35.

On hearing these fatal words the king exclaimed: "It is no fault of yours; my evil destiny like some demoniacal delusion has possessed you and bids you speak.

Chaupái.

"Bharat has never dreamed of desiring the royal dignity: but by the decree of fate evil counsel has lodged in your breast. All this is the result of my sins; I can do nothing; God is against me. Hereafter beautiful Avadh shall flourish again under the sway of the all-perfect Ráma; all his brethren shall do him service, and his glory shall spread through the three spheres of creation; your disgrace and my remorse, though we die, shall never be effaced or forgotten. Now do whatever seemeth you good, only stay out of

my sight and let your face be veiled : with clasped hands I ask but this, speak not to me again so long as I live. You too will repent at the last, O miserable woman, who aiming at the tiger have thus shot dead the cow."

Dohá 36.

The king fell to the ground crying again and again : "Why have you wrought this ruin ?" But the perfidious queen spoke not a word, like a funeral pile that is ever burning.

Chaupái.

The king in his distress sobbing out "Ráma, Ráma," was like some luckless bird clipped of its wings. In his heart he was praying : "May the day never break nor any one go and tell Ráma. Rise not, great patriarch of the solar race, for at the sight of Avadh your breast will be consumed with anguish." The king's affection and Kaikeyi's cruelty were both the most extreme that God could make. While the monarch was yet lamenting, day broke and the music of lute and pipe and conch resounded at his gate. Bards recited his titles, minstrels sung his praises ; but like arrows they wounded the king, as he heard them. All tokens of rejoicing pleased him as little as the adornments of a widow who ascends the funeral pile. That night no one had slept from the joyous anticipation of beholding Ráma.

Dohá 37.

At the gate was a crowd of servants and ministers, who exclaimed as they beheld the risen sun, "What can be the reason why to-day of all days our lord awaketh not ?

Chaupái.

"He was always wont to wake at the last watch ; to-day it strikes us as very strange. Go Sumanta and rouse him and obtain the royal order to commence the work." Sumanta entered the palace, but as he passed on was struck with awe and dismay at its appearance, as though some terrible monster were about to spring upon him and devour him ; it seemed the very home of calamity and distress. Asking, but with no one to answer him, he came to the apartment where were the king and Kaikeyi ; with the salutation

"Live for ever" he bowed the head and sat down. On beholding the king's condition he was much distressed, for he was fallen on the ground crushed and colourless, like a lotus broken off from its root. The terrified minister could ask no question; but she, full of evil and void of all good, answered and said:

Dohá 38.

"The king has not slept all night: God knows why. He has done nothing but mutter 'Ráma, Ráma,' even till daybreak; but he has not told me the reason.

Chaupái.

"Go at once and send Ráma here, and when you come back you can ask what the matter is." Perceiving it to be the king's wish, Sumanta went; but he saw that the queen had formed some evil design. So anxious was he that his feet scarcely touched the ground as he wondered to himself 'What will the king have to say to Ráma?' Composing himself as he reached the gate, when all observed his sadness and asked the cause, he reassured them and proceeded to the prince's abode. When Ráma saw Sumanta coming he received him with the same honour that he would have shown to his own father. Looking him in the face, he declared the king's commands and returned with him. Remarking the state of disorder in which Ráma accompanied the minister, the people began to be a little anxious.

Dohá 39.

When the jewel of Raghu's race had come and beheld the king's miserable condition, like some aged and pain-stricken elephant in the power of a tigress,

Chaupái.

his lips became parched and his body all aflame, like a poor snake that has been robbed of the jewel in its head. Seeing the furious Kaikeyi near, like death counting the minutes, the pitiful and amiable Raghunáth, though he now for the first time saw sorrow, and had never before heard its name even, composed himself as the occasion required and in pleasant tones asked his mother: "Tell me, mother, the cause of my father's distress, that I may endeavour

to put an end to it." "Listen, Ráma ; the sole cause is this : the king is very fond of you ; he has promised to grant me two requests, and I have asked for what I wanted ; but he is disturbed on hearing them and cannot get rid of a scruple on your account.

Dohá 40.

"On the one side is his love for his son ; on the other his promise ; he is thus in a strait. If it lies in your power, be obedient to his commands and so terminate his misery."

Chaupái.

She sat and spoke these stinging words so composedly that Cruelty itself was disturbed to hear her. From the bow of her tongue she shot forth the arrows of her speech against the king as it were some yielding target ; as though Obduracy had taken form and become a bold and practised archer. Sitting like the very incarnation of heartlessness, she expounded to Raghupatí the whole history. Ráma, the sun of the solar race, the fountain of every joy, smiled inwardly and replied in guileless terms, so soft and gracious that they seemed the very jewels of the goddess of speech : "Hearken, mother ; blessed is the son who obeys his parent's commands : a son who cherishes his father and mother is not often found in the world.

Dohá 41.

"I have a particular wish to join the hermits in the woods, and now there is also my father's order and your approval, mother.

Chaupái.

"Bharat, moreover, whom I love as myself, will obtain the kingdom ; in every way God favours me to-day. If I go not to the woods under these circumstances, then reckon me first in any assembly of fools. They who desert the tree of paradise to tend a castor-oil plant, or refuse ambrosia to ask for poison, having once lost their chance, will never get it again ; see, mother, and ponder this in your heart. One special anxiety still remains, when I see the king so exceedingly disturbed : I cannot understand, mother, how my father can be so much pained by such a trifling matter. He

is stout-hearted and a fathomless ocean of piety : [1]there must have been some great offence on my part, that he will not say a word to me : I adjure you to tell me the truth."

Dohá 42.

Though Raghubar's words were as straightforward as possible the wicked queen gave them a perverse twist ; [2]like a leech, which must always move crookedly, however smooth the water be.

Chaupái.

Seeing Ráma's readiness, the queen smiled and said with much show of false affection : " I swear by yourself and Bharat, there is no other cause that I know of. There is no room for fault in you, my son, who confer such happiness both on your parents and your brother. All that you say, Ráma, is true ; you are devoted to the wishes of your father and mother. Remonstrate, then, solemnly with your sire that he incur not sin and disgrace in his old age. Having been blest with a son like you, he cannot properly disregard your advice." These fair words in her false mouth were like Gaya and the other holy places that are in Magadha : but Ráma took his mother's speech in good sort, like the Ganges, which in its course receives and hallows any stream.

Dohá 43.

At the remembrance of Ráma, the king's swoon left him and he turned on his side. Taking advantage of the opportunity, the minister humbly informed him of Ráma's arrival.

Chaupái.

When the king heard that Ráma had come he summoned up courage and opened his eyes. The minister supported his sovereign to a seat, where the king saw Ráma falling at his feet. In an agony of affection, he clasped him to his bosom, like some snake that has recovered the jewel it had lost. As the monarch continued gazing upon Ráma, a flood of tears came into his eyes, nor in his

[1]Being so stout of heart, why should he be thus dismayed at the mere thought of losing me ? And being so pious, how is it possible that he can hesitate for a moment about keeping his word ? There must be something else in the background. I fear I have done wrong and displeased him.

[2]The queen thought to herself : By his praises of a hermit's life he hopes I may be persuaded to send Bharat to the woods instead of himself ; *or*, by his ready compliance he hopes to wheedle me out of my resolve.

sore distress could he utter a word; but again and again he pressed him to his heart. Inwardly he was praying God that Raghunáth might not be banished to the woods ; and remembering Mahádeva humbly begged : " Immortal Siva, hear my petition ; thou art easily satisfied, compassionate and generous ; recognize then in me a poor suppliant and remove my distress.

Dohá 44.

" As thou directest the hearts of all, give Ráma the sense to disregard my words and stay at home, forgetful for once of his filial affection.

Chaupái.

" Welcome disgrace and perish my good name ; may I sink into Hell rather than mount to Heaven ; be it mine to support the most intolerable pain rather than have Ráma taken from my sight." Thinking thus to himself, the king spoke not a word, while his soul quivered like a *pípal* leaf. Perceiving his father to be thus overpowered with love, Raghupati spoke again with a view to his mother, in modest and thoughtful phrase, as the place, the time, and the circumstances demanded : " Father, if I speak a little wilfully, forgive the offence by reason of my childish years. You are troubled about a very little matter ; why did you not speak and let me know of this at the first ? After seeing you, sire, I questioned my mother, and on hearing her account my fear subsided.

Dohá 45.

" Put away, father, the anxiety which at this time of rejoicing your affection has caused you, and give me your commands :" so spoke the Lord with heartfelt joy and a body quivering with emotion.

Chaupái.

" Blessed is his birth into the world whose father is rejoiced to hear of his doings. He has in his hand all the four rewards of life, who holds his parents dear as his own life. By obeying your orders, I attain the end of my existence. If, then, it be your command, I can soon come back, and after taking leave of my mother, I will throw myself once more at your feet and then start for the woods." Having thus spoken, Ráma departed, while the king in

his anguish answered not a word. The bitter news spread through the city, like the sting of a scorpion that at once affects the whole body. Every man or woman that heard it was as wretched as the creepers and bushes when a forest is on fire. Wherever it was told, every one beat his head, and the grief was too great to be endured.

Dohá 46.

Their lips were parched, their eyes streamed, their heart could not contain their sorrow ; it seemed as though the Pathetic in battle array and with beat of drum had marched into Avadh and taken up its quarters there.

Chaupái.

"It was a well-contrived plan, but God has spoilt it." In this fashion they kept abusing Kaikeyi. "What could this wicked woman mean by thus setting fire to a new-thatched house; who tears out her eyes with her own hands, and yet wishes to see ; who throws away ambrosia and prefers the taste of poison; cruel, stubborn, demented wretch, a very fire among the reeds of Raghu's line; who sitting on a branch of the tree has hacked down the stem ; and in the midst of joy has introduced this tragedy? Ráma used ever to be dear to her as life ; for what reason has she now taken to such perversity? The poets say truly that a woman's mind is altogether inscrutable, unfathomable, and beyond comprehension. Sooner may a man catch his own shadow in the glass than grasp the ways of a woman.

Dohá 47.

What is there that fire will not burn ; what is there that ocean cannot hold ; what cannot a woman do in her strength ; or what is there in the world that death does not devour?

Chaupái.

"God first ordained one thing, but now ordains something quite different, and what he would show us now is the very reverse of what he showed us then." Said one: "The king has not done well, and without consideration has granted the wicked woman her request. He has wilfully brought all this misery upon himself, and by yielding to a woman has lost all good sense and discretion."

Another wisely recognized the king's supreme virtue and would not blame him, as they repeated to one another the legends of Sivi, Dadhíchi, and Harischandra.[1] One suggested Bharat's connivance, another was distressed at the mention of such a thing; while a third stopping his ears with his hands and biting his tongue exclaimed: "Such words are false; you damn yourself by saying such things. Bharat is Ráma's dearest friend.

Dohá 48.

"Sooner shall the moon rain sparks of fire, or ambrosia have the same effect as poison, than Bharat would ever dream of doing anything to injure Ráma."

Chaupái.

One reproached the Creator, who had promised ambrosia but given poison. The whole city was agitated and every one so sad that the intolerable pain in their heart utterly effaced all the previous rejoicing. The venerable and high-born Bráhman matrons, who were Kaikeyi's chief friends, began to give her advice, and praise her good disposition; but their words pierced her like arrows: "You have always said, as every one knows, that Bharat was not so dear to you as Ráma; show him, then, your wonted affection; for what offence do you now banish him to the woods? You have never shown any jealousy of the rival queens; your love and confidence in them were known throughout the land. What has Kausalya done wrong now that you should launch this thunderbolt against the city?

Dohá 49.

What! will Sita desert her spouse, or Lakshman remain here at home? Will Bharat enjoy the dominion of the state, or the king survive without Ráma?

[1]For the legends of SIVI and DADHÍCHI see notes to *chaupái* after *dohá* 29. HARISCHANDRA, the son of Trisanku, was king of Ayodhya and the twenty-eighth in descent from Ikshváku, the founder of the solar dynasty. In order to satisfy the claims of Visvamitra, who wanted to make trial of his integrity, he sold his kingdom and all that he had, together with his wife Satyavati and his only son, and hired himself out as the servant of a man who kept a burning ghát. Whenever a corpse was brought, he had to take the fee and make it over to his master. One day a woman brought her dead child and he recognized them as his own wife and son. She had no money, and he was so zealous in his employer's interests that he would not allow the body to be burnt till the regular fee was paid. As the only way to satisfy his demand, she was stripping off the one poor rag that covered her own nakedness, when the gods interposed and restored the king to his throne and all his former prosperity.

Chaupái.

Reflect upon this and expel passion from your breast, nor make yourself a stronghold of remorse and disgrace. By all means make Bharat the king's coadjutor ; but what need is there for Ráma to be banished to the woods ? Ráma is not greedy of royal power ; he is righteous and averse to sensual pleasures. Let him leave the palace and go and live with his guru ; ask this of the king as your second petition. A son like Ráma does not deserve banishment ; what will people say to you when they hear of it ? If you do not agree to what I tell you, nothing will prosper in your hands. If this is only some jest of yours, speak out clearly and let me know. Up quickly and devise a plan to avert future remorse and disgrace.

Chhand 2.

" Devise a plan to avert remorse and disgrace and save your family. Be instant in diverting Ráma from going to the woods, and labour for nothing else. As the day without the sun, as the body without life, as the night without the moon, so (says Tulsi Dás) is Avadh without its lord ; I beg you, lady, to consider this."

Soraṭhá 2.

Pleasant to hear and beneficial in its results was the advice her friends gave ; but she paid no heed to it, having been tutored in villainy by Humpback.

Chaupái.

She answered not a word, but raged with irrepressible fury like a hungry tigress that has spied a deer. Perceiving her disease to be incurable, they left her, saying as they went " Demented wretch ! Fate has destroyed her in her pride ; she has acted in such a way as no one has ever acted before." Thus all the men and women of the city were lamenting and heaping countless abuse on the wicked queen. Burning with intolerable fever they sob out : " What hope of life is there without Ráma ?" Agonized by his loss, the people were as miserable as creatures of the deep when water fails. Great was the distress of all, whether men or women : but the saintly Ráma went to his mother, with joy in his face and fourfold joy in his soul, fearing only that the king might detain him.

Dohá 50.

The glory of Raghu's line resembled some young elephant with kingship for its chain ; the news of banishment was as its breaking ; at which he rejoices exceedingly.

Chaupái.

With folded hands the crown of Raghu's line bowed his head blithely at his mother's feet. She gave him her blessing and clasped him to her bosom, and scattered around him gifts of jewels and raiment. Again and again she kissed his face, with tears of joy in her eyes and her body all quivering with emotion. Then seating him in her lap, she pressed him once more to her heart, while drops of affection trickled from her comely breasts. Her rapture of love was past all telling, like that of a beggar made all at once rich as Kuver. Tenderly regarding his lovely features, his mother thus addrest him in sweetest tones : " Tell me, my son, I adjure you as your mother, when is the happy moment to be ; you are such an exquisite paragon of piety, amiability, and good fortune, that in you Avadh has reaped the full fruition of its Axistence :

Dohá 51.

For whom the people long as anxiously as a pair of thirsting *chátaks*, in the season of autumn, for the rainfall of Arcturus.

Chaupái.

" Go at once, my darling, I beg of you, and bathe and take something nice to eat, such as you like, and then, dear boy, approach your father : I, your mother, protest there has been too much delay." On hearing his mother's most loving speech, which seemed as the flower of the paradisal tree of affection, laden with the fragrance of delight and produced from the stem of prosperity, Ráma's bee-like soul was not distracted by the sight, but in his righteousness he distinguished the path of virtue, and thus in honied tones addressed his mother : " My father has assigned me the woods for my realm, where I shall have much in every way to do. Give me your orders, mother, with a cheerful heart, that I too may cheerfully and in auspicious wise set out for the forest. Do not in your affection give way to causeless alarm ; my happiness, mother, depends on your consent.

Dohá 52.

"After staying fourteen years in the woods, in obedience to my sire's command,[1] I will come back and again behold your feet; make not your mind uneasy."

Chaupái.

Raghubar's sweet and dutiful words pierced like arrows through his mother's heart. At the sound of his chilling speech she withered and drooped like the *jawása*[2] at a shower in the rains. The anguish of her soul was past telling, as when an elephant shrinks at the roar of a tiger. Her eyes filled with tears and her body trembled all over, like a fish overtaken by the scour of a flooded river.[3] Summing up courage, she looked her son in the face and thus spoke, in faltering accents: "My son, you are your father's darling and it is a constant delight to him to watch your doings. He had fixed an auspicious day for giving you the sceptre; for what offence does he now banish you to the woods? Tell me, my boy, the upshot of it all; who is the destroying fire of the Sun-god's line?"

Dohá 53.

After a look at Ráma's face the minister's son explained to her the reason. On hearing his account she was struck dumb: words fail to describe her condition.

Chaupái.

She could neither detain him, nor yet say Go; either way her heart was distraught with cruel pain: as though for 'moon' one had written 'eclipse:' God's hand is ever against us all. Duty and affection both laid siege to her soul; her dilemma was like that

[1] *Or*, and thus making good my father's vow.

[2] A popular Hindi couplet says that every creature in the world rejoices at the coming of the rains, except four, *viz.*, the *ák* and *jawása* plants, which flourish only on dry soil, and the saltpetre manufacturer and the carter, who cannot ply their trade:

Ak, jawása, ágara, chauthe gáriwán,
Jyon jyon chamake bijli, tyon tyon taje prán.

[3] The line, as I translate it, stands thus: *Mánjá mon-hun mín kahan vyápi*; as to the meaning of the word *mánjá* see the note *infra*. The Commentators explain it as a sickness that prevails at the beginning of the rains; or, as the scum raised on the water when the rains first break; or, as the juice of a plant. Another reading is *Mánja-hi khai mín janu mápi*, where *mápi* would be for *máti*, 'drunk.'

of a snake with a muskrat.[1] "If I keep my son, it will be a sin; my past virtue will go for nothing and my friends will abhor me. If I order him into exile, it will be a sad loss." In this distressing strait the queen was sore tried. Again reflecting discreetly on her wifely duty and remembering that Ráma and Bharat were both equally her sons, the queen in the sweetness of her disposition summoned up courage and spoke these woeful words: "May I die, my son, but you have done well; a father's command is the most paramount duty.

Dohá 54.

Though he promised you the kingdom, and now banishes you to the woods, I am not the least sad or sorry: but without you Bharat and the king and the people will all be put to terrible distress.

Chaupái.

Yet, boy, if it is only your father's order, then go not; hold your mother still greater.[2] If both father and mother bid you go, the forest will be a hundred times better than Avadh, with its god for your father, its goddess for your mother, and its birds and deer to wait upon your lotus feet. At the end of life retirement to the woods is the proper thing for a king, but I am troubled at heart when I consider your tender age. How blest the forest and how wretched Avadh if you abandon it, you, the crown of Raghu's line. If, child, I say 'take me with you,' there may be some hesitation in your mind; O my son, all hold you most dear, breath of our breath, life of our life; if you say 'mother, I go alone to the woods,' on hearing your words I sink down in despair.

Dohá 55.

Being thus minded I do not press my suit with a show of love beyond what I really feel; agree to your mother's request; or if you go alone, at least I pray you not to forget me.

[1]If it swallows the rat, it dies; if it disgorges it, it goes blind: such is the popular belief.

[2]For *jáni bari máṭá*, the words that I translate, some copies read *jái bal máṭá*.

Chaupái.

"May all the gods and the spirits of your ancestors guard you, noble boy, as closely as the eyelids guard the eyes. The term of banishment is like the water of a lake in which the fish are your friends and relations; you are all-merciful and righteous; remember then to make your plans so that you may find them all alive when you come again. Go in peace to the woods—ah! woe is me!—leaving your servants, your relatives, the whole city in bereavement; to-day the fruit of all their past good deeds has gone and awful death confronts them." Thus with many mournful moanings she clung to his feet, accounting herself the most hapless of women. Cruel and intolerable pangs pierced her heart through and through, and the burden of her misery was past all telling. Ráma raised his mother and took her to his bosom and consoled her with many soothing words.

Dohá 56.

At that moment Síta, who had heard the news, rose in great agitation, and having reverenced her mother's lotus feet, bowed her head and sat down.

Chaupái.

In tender accents her mother gave her her blessing, and at the sight of her delicate frame was more distressed than ever. With drooping eyes Síta, the perfection of beauty, the model of wifely devotion, sat and thought: "The lord of my life would go to the woods, how can I merit to accompany him? Whether in the body or only in the soul, go I must; but God's doings are inscrutable." With her lovely toe-nails she wrote upon the ground, while the music of her anklets, like the poet's honied song, rang out the passionate prayer: 'Never may we be torn from Síta's feet.' Seeing her let fall a flood of tears from her lovely eyes, Ráma's mother cried: "Hearken, my son; Síta is very delicate; she is the darling of your father and mother and all your kindred.

Dohá 57.

Her own father is Janak, a jewel of kings; her father-in-law is the Phœbus of the solar race; her lord, the perfection of beauty and virtue, is as it were the moon of the lily-like progeny of the Sun-god;

Chaupái.

I again have found in her a dear daughter, amiable, beautiful, and accomplished. She is like the apple of my eye, and my affection has so grown that it is only in Jánaki that I have my being.[1] I have tended her as carefully as the tree of paradise and watered her growth with streams of affection. When she should have blossomed and borne fruit, God has turned against me, and there is no knowing what will be the end. Or ever she left her bed or seat, I cradled her in my lap, and never has Síta set her foot on the hard ground. I cherished her as the very source of my life, and never bade her so much as even to trim the wick of a lamp. And this is the Síta who would follow you to the woods; what are your orders, O Rághunáth? Can the partridge, that drinks in with delight the rays of the moon, endure to fix its gaze on the orb of the sun?

Dohá 58.

Elephants, lions, goblins, and many fierce animals roam the woods: ah, my son, is the charming tree of life fit to set in such a deadly pasture?

Chaupái.

God has created for the forest Kol and Kirát women, who care not for bodily delights. Of nature as hard as the stone insect, the woods are no trial to them. A hermit's wife again is fit for the woods, who for the sake of penance has renounced all pleasures. But how, my son, can Síta live in the woods, who would be frightened by even the picture of a monkey? Can the cygnet that has sported in the lovely lotus-beds of the Ganges find fit abode in a muddy puddle? First ponder this, and then, as you order, I will instruct Jánaki. If she remain at home and call me mother, she will be the support of my life." Raghubír, on hearing his mother's speech, which was drenched as it were with the ambrosia of grace and affection,

Dohá 59.

replied in tender and discreet terms for his mother's consolation, and began to set clearly before Jánaki all the pleasures and troubles of forest life,

[1] In the original is a play upon words which it is impossible to preserve in a translation; *ján prán* the ordinary expression for the 'breath of life,' being presented to the eye by the conjunction of *prán* with the first syllable of Síta's name Jánaki.

Chaupái.

speaking diffidently as in the presence of his mother, and considering well within himself the requirements of the time: "Hearken, lady, to my instructions; nor form any different fancies in your mind. If you desire your own good and mine, agree to what I say and remain at home. My order is this: the service of a mother-in-law is in every way, madam, a blessing to a family. There is no other duty so paramount as reverential submission to a husband's parents. Whenever my mother recalls me to mind and is distracted by affectionate solicitude, do you, my love, console her with old-world tales and tender speeches. I speak from my heart and confirm it with a hundred oaths; it is for my mother's sake, beloved, I leave you here.

Dohá 60.

The reward of virtue can be obtained without trouble by submission to Scripture and one's spiritual director; through their obstinacy Gálava[1] and king Nahusha[2] were subjected to all sorts of trouble.

Chaupái.

I shall soon fulfil my father's words and come back again; hearken, fair and sensible dame. The days will quickly pass away; listen, love, to my advice. If, my spouse, you persist in your affectionate obstinacy, you will rue it in the end. The forest is exceedingly toilsome and terrible, with awful heat and cold and rain and wind; the path is beset with prickly grass and stones, and you will have to walk without any protection for your feet; and your lotus feet are so soft and pretty, while the road is most difficult; and there are huge mountains, chasms and precipices, streams,

[1]Gálava was a pupil of Visvamitra's. When he had completed his studies he asked his tutor what fee he ought to pay. He was told there was no fee. However, he still persisted in asking, till at last Visvamitra became annoyed, and to get rid of him said he would be satisfied with nothing less than a thousand black-eared horses. After a long search and many enquiries, Gálava discovered three childless Rájas who had each 200 horses of the kind that he required, and they agreed to let him have them, but only on this condition, that he got each of them a son. Gálava then went to Yayáti, whose daughter had the miraculous gift of bearing a son for any one she wished, and yet herself remaining a virgin. By her means each of the three kings became a father. The 600 horses were made over to Gálava, and he presented them to Visvamitra, who as an equivalent for the other 400 horses, wanting to make up the thousand, had himself two sons by the same mysterious bride.

[2] For the legend of king Nahusha see note to *dohá* 219.

rivers and torrents, deep and impassable, terrible to behold ; while bears and tigers, wolves, lions and elephants make such a roaring that the boldest is dismayed.

Dohá 61.

The ground will be your couch, the bark of trees your raiment, and your food bulbs, wild fruits, and roots; nor think that even they will be always forthcoming every day, but only when they are in season.

Chaupái.

There are man-eating demons who assume all sorts of deceptive forms; the rainfall on the hills is excessive, and in short the hardships of the forest are past all telling. There are terrible serpents and fierce wild birds and gangs of goblins that steal both man and woman. The bravest shudders at the thought of the dense forest; while you, my fawn-eyed wife, are timid by nature. Ah! delicate dame, you are not fit for the woods; people will revile me on hearing of such a thing. Can the swan that has been nurtured in the ambrosial flood of the Mánas lake exist in the salt sea? Can the *koil*, that roves with delight through the luxuriant mango groves, take pleasure in a jungle of *karíl* bushes? Ponder this, my fair bride, and stay at home ; the hardships of the forest are too great.

Dohá 62.

Whoever with a view to her own good does not at once accept the advice given by a friend, or a *guru*, or her husband, shall assuredly have a surfeit of repentance and gain no good."

Chaupái.

On hearing the tender and winning words of her husband, Síta's lotus eyes filled with tears, and his soothing advice caused her as burning pain as the autumn moon causes the *chakwi.* In her distress no answer came to her lips : ' So great is his love that he would leave me behind.' Perforce restraining her tears and summing up courage, Earth's daughter embraced her mother's feet, and with folded hands thus spake : " Pardon me, lady, my great presumption: my dear lord has taught me what is all

for my own good ; but I look to my feelings, and conclude that no sorrow in the world is so great as separation from one's beloved.

Dohá 63.

O my dear lord, most compassionate, beautiful, bounteous and wise, the moon of the lilies of the Raghu race, heaven without you would be very hell.

Chaupái.

Dear are father and mother, sisters and brothers ; dear are my companions and my many friends ; but father-in-law and mother-in-law, spiritual director, generous associates, and even sons, however beautiful, amiable, and affectionate, nay, my lord, all love and every tie of kindred, to a woman without her husband, are a greater distress than the sun's most burning heat. Life, wealth, house, land, city and empire are but accumulated misery to a woman bereft of her lord. Ease is disease, her jewels a burden, and the world like the torments of hell. Without you, O lord of my soul, there is nothing in the whole world that could give me any comfort. As the body without its soul, as a river without water, so, my lord, is a woman without her husband. With you, my lord, are all delights, so long as I can behold your face that vies in brightness with the autumn moon.

Dohá 64.

The birds and deer will be my attendants, the forest my city, and strips of bark my glistening robes ; with my lord a hut of grass will be as the palace of the gods, and all will be well.

Chaupái.

The sylvan nymphs and gods will of their grace protect me like my own lord's parents ; my simple litter of grass and twigs will with my lord become a sumptuous marriage-couch ; bulbs, roots, and fruits will form an ambrosial repast, and the mountains resemble the stately halls of Avadh. Every moment that I gaze on my lord's lotus feet, I shall be as glad as the *chakwi* at the dawn. You have recounted, my lord, the numerous hardships of the forest, its terrors, annoyances, and many discomforts ; but, O fountain of

mercy, all those united will not be comparable to the pain of bereavement. Consider this, O jewel of wisdom, and take me with you, abandon me not. Why make long supplication? my lord is full of compassion and knoweth the heart.

Dohá 65.

Do you think, if you keep me at Avadh, that I can survive till the end of your exile? O most beautiful, most bountiful help of the helpless, fountain of grace and of love,

Chaupái.

as I go along the road I shall never weary, every moment beholding your lotus feet. In every way I shall minister to my beloved, and relieve him of all the toil of the march. Seated in the shade of some tree, I shall lave your feet and rapturously fan you, and gazing on your body stained with sweat and blackened by the sun, what thought, my dearest lord, shall I have for my own hard times. Spreading grass and leaves on the level ground, your slave will all night shampoo your feet, and ever gazing on your gracious form, nor heat nor wind will ever vex me. Who will look at me when I am with my lord, except as a hare or jackal furtively regards a lioness. Am I to be dainty and delicate, while my lord roams the woods? is penance to be your portion and enjoyment mine?

Dohá 66.

My heart will burst at the mere sound of so cruel a sentence, and never will my miserable existence survive the anguish and torture of bereavement."

Chaupái.

So saying, Síta was overwhelmed with distress, nor could endure the word 'separation.' On seeing her condition, Ráma made sure, 'If I insist upon leaving her, I leave her dead.' Then said the compassionate lord of the solar race: "Have done with lamentation and come with me to the woods. There is no time now for weeping; at once make your preparations for the journey." Having consoled his beloved with these tender words, he embraced his mother's feet and received her blessing: "Return quickly and relieve your subjects' distress, nor forget me your hard-hearted

mother.[1] Who knows but God may change my lot, and my eyes may see you both again. Ah! my son, when will arrive the happy day and moment that I shall live to see your moon-like face once more?

Dohá 67.

When again I shall call you 'my child,' 'my darling,' 'noblest and best of Raghu's line,' 'my own son,' and fondly bid you come to my arms that I may gaze upon your features?"

Chaupái.

Seeing that his mother was so agitated by affection that she could not speak, and was utterly overwhelmed with distress, Ráma did everything to console her, and the pathos of the scene was beyond description. Then Jánaki embraced her mother's feet: "Hearken, mother, I am of all women most miserable. At the time when I should have been doing you service, fate has banished me to the woods and has denied me my desire. Cease to sorrow, but cease not to love me; Fate is cruel, I am blameless." On hearing Síta's words her mother was so afflicted that her state was past all telling. Again and again she took her to her breast and summing up courage thus blest and admonished her: "May your prosperity be as enduring as the streams of Gangá and Jamuná!"

Dohá 68.

When her mother had repeatedly blessed and admonished Síta, she took her leave, after again and again affectionately bowing her head at her lotus feet.

Chaupái.

When Lakshman heard the news, he started up in dismay with a doleful face, his body all of a tremble and his eyes full of tears, and ran and clasped his feet in an agony of affection. He could not speak, but stood and stared aghast, like some poor fish drawn out of the water, thinking within himself: "Good God, what will happen? All my happiness and past good deeds are gone for ever. What will Raghunáth tell me to do? Will he keep me here, or take

[1]That is to say, I must be hard-hearted, for if not, I should die at once.

me with him?" When Ráma saw his brother with folded hands renouncing life and home and all, he addrest him thus—the all-righteous Ráma, fountain of grace, love, and perfect bliss—"Brother, do not afflict yourself with love, but reflect that all will be well in the end.

Dohá 69.

They who submit without reserve to the commands of their father and mother, their spiritual director, or their lord, are born into the world to some purpose; otherwise their birth is in vain.

Chaupái.

Consider this, brother, and hearken to my advice; wait upon the feet of your father and mother. Neither Bharat is at home nor Ripu-súdan; the king is old and sorrowing for me. If I go to the woods and take you with me Avadh will be completely masterless, and an intolerable weight of affliction will fall upon priest and parents, subjects, family and all. Stay then to comfort them; if not, brother, it will be a great sin. The king, whose faithful subjects endure distress, is of a truth a prince of hell. This is sound doctrine, brother; ponder it and stay." Lakshman was grievously distrest on hearing this, and his body became as dead and shrivelled as a lotus that has been touched by the frost.

Dohá 70.

Overmastered by love, he could not answer, but clung in anguish to his feet: "O my lord, I am your slave and you my master; leave me, then what can I do?

Chaupái.

You have given me, good sir, excellent advice; but in my confusion I find it impracticable. Valiant leaders of men and champions of the faith can master such abstruse doctrine, but I am a mere child, nurtured by your affection; can a cygnet uplift Mount Mandar or Meru? I know no *guru*, nor father, nor mother; believe me, my lord, I speak from my heart: all the love in the world, all claims of kin, all affection, sympathy, wisdom, and skill are for me centred in you, my lord, the protector of the humble, the reader of the heart. Expound questions of theology to one who aims at fame

and glory and high estate ; I am in heart, word, and deed devoted only to your feet, and am I, gracious lord, to be discarded?"

Dohá 71.

The compassionate lord, on hearing the tender and modest words of his good brother, took him to his bosom, and seeing him so affectionately dejected thus consoled him :

Chaupái.

"Go, brother, and take leave of your mother, and then come and set out for the woods." On hearing Raghubar thus speak, he was overjoyed ; his triumph was great, his sorrow all gone. He approached his mother as glad of heart as a blind man who has recovered his sight, and while he bowed his head at her feet, his heart was away with Raghunandan and Jánaki. Seeing his agitation, his mother enquired the cause, and Lakshman told her the whole history. On hearing his cruel speech she trembled like a fawn that sees the forest on fire all around it. Lakshman reflected : "Everything goes wrong to-day ; her very love will work me harm." Timidly and hesitatingly he asked her permission to go, thinking "Good God, will she let me go or not?"

Dohá 72.

After reflecting on the beauty and amiable disposition of Ráma and Síta, and considering the king's affection, Sumitrá beat her head and exclaimed : "That wicked woman is at the bottom of this bad business."

Chaupái.

But perceiving the time to be untoward, she took patience and in her kindness of heart answered gently : "Your mother, child, is Vaidehi, and Ráma is your most loving father; where Ráma dwells, there is Avadh ; and wherever is the light of the sun, there is day. If Ráma and Síta go to the woods, you have no business at Avadh. A *guru*, a father and mother, brethren, the gods and our masters are all to be tended as our own life ; but Ráma is dearer than life, is the soul of our soul, and the disinterested friend of all ; our dearest and most honoured friends are to be accounted those of Ráma's household. Thinking thus to yourself go with

them to the woods and receive, my son, the fruition of your existence.

Dohá 73.

You have become the receptacle of the highest good fortune, and I too—ah, woe is me!—if from an unfeigned heart you have made Ráma's feet your home.

Chaupái.

A mother indeed is she who has a son devoted to Raghubar; if not, it is better to be barren, she has given birth in vain ; a son who is Ráma's enemy is a curse. It is your good fortune that Ráma goes to the woods ; and other reason is there none ; this, my son, is the highest reward for all good deeds, to have a sincere affection for the feet of Ráma and Síta. Never give way even in thought to lust, or passion, or envy, or pride, or delusion ; but put aside all changeableness and serve them in heart, word, and deed. For you the forest is a place of joy, since Ráma and Síta, your father and mother, will be there with you. Take heed, my son, that Ráma be put to no trouble : this is my admonition.

Chhand 3.

This is my admonition, my son ; see that Ráma and Síta live at ease, and in the woods forget to remember their father and mother, their friends and relations, and all the pleasures of the city." Having given her son such instruction and commands (says Tulsi) she again invoked upon him her blessing : " May your love for Síta and Raghubír be constant and unsullied and ever renewed !"

Soratha 3.

Having bowed his head at his mother's feet, he left in haste with anxious heart, as flies a hapless deer that has burst a strong net.

Chaupái.

He went to Jánaki's lord, and his soul rejoiced to recover his dear society. After reverencing Ráma and Síta's gracious feet, he proceeded with them to the king's palace. The citizens say to one another : " How goodly a plan God made and now has marred !" With wasted frame, sad soul and doleful face, they were in as great

distress as bees robbed of their honey ; wringing their hands, beating their heads and lamenting, like wretched birds that have been clipt of their wings. There was a great crowd in the royal hall : grief immeasurable, beyond all telling. The minister raised the king and seated him, as Ráma advanced with loving address ; when he saw Síta and his two sons the king's agitation was profound.

Dohá 74.

Again and again turning his troubled gaze on Síta and his two fair sons, he clasped them to his bosom time after time in an agony of love.

Chaupái.

In his agitation he could not speak ; grief overmastered him and wild anguish of heart. After most affectionately bowing his head at his feet, Raghunáth arose and begged permission to depart. " Father, give me your blessing and commands ; why so dismayed at this time of rejoicing ? From excessive attachment, sire, to any beloved object honour is lost and disgrace incurred." At this the love-sick king arose and taking Raghupati by the arm made him sit down : " Hearken, my son ; the sages say that Ráma is the lord of all creation, animate or inanimate ; that God after weighing good and bad actions and mentally considering them apportions their reward, and the doer reaps the fruit of his own doings ; this is the doctrine of the Scriptures and the verdict of mankind.

Dohá 75.

But for one to sin and another to reap its reward—the ways of God are most mysterious ; who is there in the world who can comprehend them ?"

Chaupái.

The king in his anxiety to detain Ráma tried every honest expedient, but when he saw that he was bent on going—righteous, brave, and wise as he was—he took and pressed Síta to his bosom and gave her much most affectionate advice, telling her of all the intolerable hardships of the forest, and reminding her of the happiness she might enjoy with her parents-in-law or at her father's house. But Síta's heart was set on Ráma's feet, and neither home seemed to her attractive nor the woods repulsive. Every one else

too warned her with stories of all the many miseries of the desert. The minister's wife and the *guru's*—prudent dames—affectionately urged her in gentle tones: "He has not sent you into exile. You should do as you are told by your parents and your *guru*."

Dohá 76.

This advice, friendly and kind and tender and judicious as it was, was not pleasing to Síta to hear; in the same way as the *chakwi* is distrest by the rays of the autumn moon.

Chaupái.

She was, however, too modest to reply; but Kaikeyi on hearing them started up in excitement and, bringing a box of anchorites' dresses and ornaments, placed it before her and said in whispered tones: "Raghubír, you are dearer than life to the king; he cannot rid himself of his too great kindness and love, and will never tell you to go, though he forfeit his virtue, his honour, and his hope of heaven. Think of this and act as seems to you good." Ráma was glad to hear his mother's suggestion, but her words pierced the king like arrows: 'Will my miserable life never leave me?' In his distress he fainted outright, and no one knew what to do. But Ráma quickly assumed the hermit's dress and bowing his head to his father and mother went forth.

Dohá 77.

Having completed his full equipment for the woods, the lord set forth with his wife and brother, after reverencing the feet of the Brahmans and his *guru*, and leaving them all in bewilderment.

Chaupái.

He came out and stood at Vasishtha's gate; the beholders were consumed as with a fire by the anguish of parting. With kindly words Raghubír consoled them all and, summoning the Brahmans, begged his *guru* to give them a year's maintenance. Many gifts he bestowed with respectful courtesy, satisfying the mendicants with largesse and civilities, and his personal friends with demonstrations of affection. Next he called up his men-servants and maid-servants and made them over to his *guru*, saying with clasped hands: "O sir, be to them as their own father and mother, and cherish them

all." Again and again did Ráma with clasped hands and in gentle tones address each one of them: "He is my best friend in whom the king finds comfort.

Dohá 78.

So act, all thoughtful and considerate citizens, that my mother be not distrest by my absence."

Chaupái.

When Ráma had thus exhorted them all, he cheerfully bowed his head at his *guru's* lotus feet, and invoking Ganes, Gauri, and Mahádev, and receiving their blessing sallied forth. As he went, there was great lamentation and a mournful wailing throughout the city, terrible to hear. In Lanka omens of ill, in Avadh exceeding distress; while mingled joy and sorrow possessed the hosts of heaven. When his swoon had passed, the king awoke and sent for Sumanta and thus began: "Ráma has gone to the woods, and yet my life flits not; what good does it hope to get by still remaining in my body? What more grievous torture can there be, to force it from my frame?" Again taking patience, he added: "Friend, take you the chariot and go,

Dohá 79.

the two boys are young and delicate, and Janak's daughter, a delicate girl, take them up into the chariot and show them the forest, and come back in a day or two.

Chaupái.

Both brothers are brave, and Raghurái, the very ocean of truth and staunch to his word; if they will not turn, do you with clasped hands humbly entreat him: 'Send back, my lord, the daughter of Mithilá's king.' When Síta is alarmed by the sight of the forest, take the opportunity of telling her my instructions, saying: 'This is the message sent by your father-in-law and mother-in-law; come back, daughter; there are many perils in the desert. You can stay at your pleasure now with your own father, now with your husband's parents.' In this manner try every way you can; if she comes back it will be the succour of my life; if not, it will end in my death; what can I do? God is against me." So saying, the king fainted and fell to the ground, crying: "O that you could bring them back to me, Ráma, Lakshman, and Sítá!"

Dohá 80.

Having received the king's commands, he bowed his head and in haste made ready the chariot, and went to the place outside the city where were Síta and the two brothers.

Chaupái.

Then Sumanta declared to them the king's message and respectfully made Ráma ascend the chariot. When Síta and the two brothers had mounted and drove away, they mentally bowed the head to Avadh. As the bereaved city saw Ráma depart, all the people began confusedly to follow him. The gracious lord said everything to console them, and they turned homewards, but again came back overmastered by their affection. Avadh appeared to them as gloomy and oppressive as the dark night of death; the citizens looked with trembling at one another like so many wild beasts; their home seemed like the grave, their retainers like ghosts, and their sons, friends, and neighbours as the angels of death. The trees and creepers in the gardens all withered; the streams and ponds were fearful to behold.

Dohá 81.

All the horses, elephants, and tame deer, the town-cattle, the cuckoos, and the peacocks, the *koils*, swans, parrots, *mainas*, herons, flamingoes, and partridges,

Chaupái.

all stood aghast at Ráma's departure, dumb and motionless as statues. The whole city resembled some dense forest, in which the agitated people were as the birds and deer, while Kaikeyi had been fashioned by God as some wild woman of the woods, who had set all in a fierce blaze. Unable to endure the burning pain of Ráma's departure, the people all flocked after him in their bewilderment, each one thinking to himself 'There is no happiness apart from Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta. Everything can be had where Ráma is, and Avadh without Raghubír is of no account.' With this settled idea, they bore him company, abandoning halls of delight that the gods might envy. For what influence can the pleasures of sense have upon men who are devoted to Ráma's lotus feet?

Dohá 82.

Young and old, all left their homes and followed him ; and on the bank of the Tamasá Ráma made his first day's halt.

Chaupái.

When Raghupati saw his people overpowered with love his kind heart was greatly troubled. The merciful lord Raghunáth, being quickly touched by the grief of others, spoke to them many words of tenderness and affection and did his best to comfort them, admonishing them much of their religious duty. But in their fondness they could not tear themselves away. As there was no way of overcoming their innate affection, Raghurái was reduced to perplexity. Worn out with grief and toil the people fell asleep—a divine delusion helping to beguile them—and when two watches of the night were spent Ráma affectionately addressed his minister: "Father, drive the chariot so as to efface the tracks of the wheels ; there is no other way of settling the business."

Dohá 83.

Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta then mounted the car, after bowing the head to Sambhu's feet, and the minister drove it speedily hither and thither, confusing the tracks.

Chaupái.

At daybreak the people all woke, and there was a great cry that Raghubír had gone. They could no how distinguish the tracks of the chariot, though they ran in all directions, crying Ráma, Ráma, like as when a ship is sinking at sea, all the merchants are in terror. One suggested to another: 'Ráma left us on seeing our distress.' They revile themselves and envy the fish,[1] crying: "A curse on our life away from Raghubír ; as God has robbed us of our Beloved, why has he not granted us our prayer to die?" With many such lamentations they returned to Avadh full of heaviness ; the anguish of parting was beyond description, and it was only the hope of his return that kept them alive.

Dohá 84.

Men and women alike began to fast and make vows to secure his return, like the poor *chakwas* and the lotus when bereft of the sun.

[1]That die at once when withdrawn from their natural element.

Chaupái.

Síta with the minister and the two brothers arrived on their way at the city of Sringavera. On beholding the river of the gods, Ráma alighted and with much joy made it his obeisance. The minister, Lakshman, and Síta saluted it also, and Ráma was as glad as any of them; for the Ganges is the source of all bliss and beatitude, the author of all happiness, the destroyer of every sorrow. Many were the stories and legends that Ráma repeated as he gazed upon its flood, instructing the minister, his younger brother, and his bride in the majesty and grandeur of the heavenly stream. They bathed and all the fatigue of the march was removed; they drank of the holy water and their soul was gladdened. It is only in vulgar phrase that fatigue is ascribed to him by whose remembrance all the burdens of the world are lightened.

Dohá 85.

Ráma, the champion of the solar race, is the holy God, of supreme wisdom and bliss, the bridge over the ocean of existence,[1] though he acts like an ordinary man.

Chaupái.

When Guh, the Nishád, heard the news, he was glad and called together his friends and relations, and taking a great quantity of fruits and vegetables as a present, went out to meet him with infinite joy of heart. With a profound obeisance he put down his offering before him and gazed upon the lord with the utmost devotion. Raghurái with his natural kindliness asked him of his health and seated him by his side. "The sight of your lotus feet, sire, is health indeed; I am most highly favoured, as all will admit. My land, my house, my fortune are yours, my lord; I and mine are your poor vassals. Do me the favour of entering my abode; treat me as one of your servants and I shall be the envy of all men." "All that you say, my good friend, is very true; but my father has given me other commands.

[1] *Sansriti-ságara-setu*: The 'transmigrations,' *Sansriti*, through which the soul has to pass, would be endless, a limitless ocean (*ságara*) from which none could escape, were it not that Ráma has given himself to be the bridge, *setu*, over the abyss. It is almost impossible to translate this and similar phrases at once literally, concisely, and intelligibly; for birth and life, which we are taught to regard as blessings, are to the Hindu theologian a curse. *Anuharat* here means simply 'like.'

Dohá 86.

For fourteen years I must dwell in the woods and adopt the rules, the dress, and the diet of a hermit; to stay in a village is forbidden." On hearing this Guh was much grieved.

Chaupái.

Seeing Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta to be so beautiful, the citizens affectionately protested: "What kind of parents can they be, friend, who have banished such children to the woods?" Said one: "The king has done well to give our eyes such a treat." Then the Nishád chief on reflection decided upon a beautiful sinsapa tree, and took Raghunáth and showed him the place, who declared it to be most excellent. The citizens after paying him their respects went home, and Ráma proceeded to the performance of his evening devotions. Guh made and spread for him a charming bed of grass and soft leaves, and brought him leaf-made bowls filled with all such fruits and vegetables as he knew to be sweet and wholesome and good.

Dohá 87.

After he had partaken of the fruits and herbs with the minister and Síta and his brother, the jewel of Raghu's line lay down to sleep, while Lakshman shampooed his feet.

Chaupái.

When he knew his lord to be asleep, he arose and softly bade Sumanta take rest, while he himself fitted an arrow to his bow and took up the position of a marksman at a little distance, there to watch. The affectionate Guh having summoned trusty sentinels and stationed them roundabout, went himself and sat down by Lakshman, with his quiver at his back and an arrow fitted to his bow. When the Nishád saw Ráma asleep his soul was troubled with excess of love, his body thrilled with emotion, his eyes flowed with tears, and he thus in tender accents addressed Lakshman: "The king's palace is altogether beautiful, nor can the courts of heaven be compared to it; its charming pavilions, inlaid with precious stones, seem to have been adorned by Love's own hands.

Dohá 88.

Rich and luxurious are its beds, sweet with odorous flowers and perfumes, with jewelled lamps and appliances of every description,

Chaupái.

with all kinds of coverlets and pillows, and mattrasses as soft and white as the froth of milk, where Síta and Ráma reposed at night and put to shame with their beauty both Rati and Kámdeva, who now sleep on a pallet, weary and naked, pitiful to behold. The Ráma, whom his father and mother, his own family and all the people of the city, his companions and associates, his men-servants and maid-servants, all cherished as tenderly as their own life, is now sleeping on the bare ground. The Síta, whose father is Janak of world-wide fame; whose father-in-law is Dasarath, the friend of the king of heaven; whose spouse is Rámchandra; is now sleeping on the ground; is not God against us all? Are Síta and Ráma fit dwellers of the desert? Well do men say, 'Fate is supreme.'

Dohá 89.

The foolish daughter of Kekaya has wrought sad mischief by bringing this trouble on Ráma and Jánaki on their day of rejoicing.

Chaupái.

She has become the axe at the root of the tree of the solar race, and through her wickedness has plunged the whole world in woe." Seeing Ráma and Síta asleep upon the ground, the Nishád became sad exceedingly; but Lakshman addressed him in sweet and gentle tones that were full of the essence of wisdom, sobriety, and faith: "No man is the cause of another's joy or sorrow; all is the fruit of one's own actions, brother. Union and separation, pleasure, good and evil, friendship, enmity and neutrality are snares of delusion. Birth, death, all the entanglements of the world, prosperity and adversity, fortune and destiny, earth, home, wealth, city and family, heaven, hell, and all human affairs; all that you can see, or hear, or imagine in your mind, all is delusive and unreal.

Dohá 90.

In a dream a beggar becomes a king and the lord of heaven a pauper; but on waking the one is no gainer, nor the other a loser; this is the way in which you should regard the world.

Chaupái.

Reasoning thus, be not angry with any one, nor vainly attribute blame to any. All are sleepers in a night of delusion, and see many kinds of dreams; in this world of darkness they only are awake who detach themselves from the material, and are absorbed in contemplation of the Supreme; nor can any soul be regarded as aroused from slumber till it has renounced every sensual enjoyment. Then ensues spiritual enlightenment and escape from the errors of delusion, and finally devotion to Ráma. This, friend, is man's highest good, to be devoted to Ráma in thought, word, and deed. Ráma is God, the totality of good, imperishable, invisible, uncreated, incomparable, void of all change, indivisible, whom the Veda declares that it cannot define.

Dohá 91.

In his mercy he has taken the form of a man and performs human actions, out of the love he bears to his faithful people and to Earth, and the Bráhmans and cows and gods. On hearing them, the snares of the world are broken asunder.

Chaupái.

Having thus reflected, friend, give no place to deceits, but fix your affections on Síta and Ráma's feet." While he was yet speaking of Ráma's virtues, the day broke and the joy of the world awoke. After performing every purificatory rite he bathed, the all-pure and wise, and called for some milk of the *bar* tree, and bound up the hair of his head into a knot, as did also his brother. On seeing this, Sumanta's eyes filled with tears. Sore pained at heart, with doleful face and clasped hands he made this humble speech: "The king of Kosala, my lord, thus enjoined me: 'Take the chariot and go with Ráma; let them see the forest and bathe in the Ganges, and then speedily bring them home again, both the brothers, Lakshman, Ráma and Síta too, bring them back, settling all their doubts and scruples.'

Dohá 92.

Thus spoke the king, sire ; but, woe is me ! I can do only as you tell me." He fell in supplication at his feet weeping helplessly as a child.

Chaupái.

" Have pity, my son, and so act that Avadh be not left a widow." Ráma raised the minister and thus exhorted him : " Father, you know the path of virtue. Sivi, Dadhíchi, and king Harischandra, for the sake of their religion, endured countless afflictions. Rantideva[1] and wise king Bali kept their faith through many trials. There is no virtue equal to truth, as the Vedas, Shástras, and Puránas declare. I have reached this virtue by an easy road : if I abandon it, my disgrace will be published in earth, heaven, and hell : and disgrace to a man of honour is pain as grievous as a million deaths. But why say all this to you, father? I only incur sin by answering you.

Dohá 93.

Fall humbly at my father's feet and with clasped hands beg of him not to distress himself in any way on my account.

Chaupái.

You, again, are equally dear to me as my father, and I implore you, sire, to do everything that will prevent the king from grieving about me." On hearing this conversation between Raghunáth and the minister, the Nishád and his people were sad and Lakshman spoke a little angrily. But the lord stopt him, knowing it to be altogether out of place, and nervously adjured Sumanta, by the love he bore him, not to repeat his words. Sumanta then proceeded with the king's message : " Síta is not able to bear the hardships of the desert ; you should try and persuade her to return to Avadh, otherwise I shall have no prop left, and must die as inevitably as a fish out of water.

Dohá 94.

She has a happy home both with her own mother and with her husband's parents, and she can live when she pleases at either, till these troubles are overpast.

[1]Rantideva, the son of Sankriti, was a king famous for his great liberality. He offered so many cattle in sacrifice that their blood formed a river, said to be the Chambal.

Chaupái.

The piteousness of the king's entreaties and the earnestness of his affection are more than I can express." On hearing his father's message, the All-merciful tried in every way to persuade Sita: "Only return; and the affliction of your parents, your *guru*, and all your friends and relations will be at an end." Replied Vaidehi to her husband's words: "Hearken most dear and loving lord, full of compassion and of infinite wisdom; can a shadow exist apart from its substance? Where is the sunlight without the sun, or the radiance of the moon when the moon is not?" Having uttered this affectionate prayer to her husband, she turned to the minister with these winning words: "You are as much my benefactor as my own father or my father-in-law, and if I answer you, it is the height of impropriety.

Dohá 95.

Yet, sire, take it not ill of me if in my grief I withstand you; away from the lotus feet of my lord's son all my kindred are nought.

Chaupái.

I have seen my father's luxury and magnificence and his footstool thronged with the jewelled crowns of kings, yet though his palace be such a blissful abode, I have no pleasure there without my spouse. My Imperial father-in-law, the sovereign of Kosala, is of such glorious renown throughout the fourteen spheres that the king of heaven would advance to meet him and cede him half his throne; yet though he be so great and Avadh his home, and though the whole of his family be dear to me and my mother-in-law as my own mother, I could not find pleasure in a single thing for a moment, away from the lotus flowers of Ráma's feet. Though the forest road be rough, and the country mountainous, full of elephants and tigers, boundless lakes and streams, wild Kols and Kiráts, and beasts and birds; all is delightful if my dear lord be with me.

Dohá 96.

Fall at the feet of my father-in-law and my mother-in-law and tell them humbly from me not to grieve on my account, for I am perfectly happy in the woods.

Chaupái.

With the sovereign of my soul and my dear brother, stoutest of champions, bearing bow and quiver, the toilsome wanderings of the march will not trouble me at all ; be not then the least anxious about me." On hearing Síta's chilling speech, Sumanta became as distressed as a serpent at the loss of its head-jewel. With eyes that saw not, and ears that heard not, and unable to utter a word, he was completely confounded. Ráma said everything to console him, but his heart refused to be comforted. Earnestly he begged that he too might accompany him; but Raghunandan returned an appropriate answer to all he urged. " Ráma's commands cannot be withstood ; Fate is against me, I can do nothing." Bowing his head at the feet of Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta, he turned away like a merchant who has lost his all.

Dohá 97.

The very horses of his chariot, as he drove, continued whinnying and looking back upon Ráma ; and the Nishád at the sight gave way to his grief and beat his head and moaned :

Chaupái.

" When even brute beasts are so distrest at his loss, how can his subjects and his father and mother exist without him ?" Having thus perforce dismissed Sumanta, Ráma went on his way and came to the bank of the Ganges. When he called for the boat, the ferryman would not bring it, saying : " I know your magic power; every one says that the dust of your lotus feet is a charm for making man. A rock on which it fell became a beautiful woman, and wood is not so hard as stone. Should my boat in like manner be turned into a saint's wife, the ferry will be closed and the boat lost, which is the support of my whole family. I have no other means of living. If, my lord, you are bent on crossing, you must allow me first to wash your feet.

Chhand 4.

After bathing your lotus feet and taking you on board I will not accept any toll. I tell you the truth, O Ráma, swearing by yourself and Dasarath—Lakshman may shoot me with his arrows, but I will not take you across, gracious lord, until I have bathed your feet."

Soraṭhá 4.

On hearing the ferryman's rude but loving speech, the All-merciful smiled[1] and looked at Jánaki and Lakshman ;

Chaupái.

then gaily cried: "Do anything to save your boat. Bring water at once and bathe my feet; time has been lost ; take me across." The gracious lord thus made request of a boatman ; even he by one thought on whose name mankind is transported across the boundless ocean of existence, and for whose three strides the whole universe did not suffice.[2] The Ganges rejoiced on beholding his toe-nails,[3] and at the sound of his words was relieved of all anxiety. On receiving Ráma's commands, the ferryman brought a bason full of water, and in an ecstacy of joy and love proceeded to bathe his lotus feet. All the gods rained down flowers and uttered their congratulations : "Never was any one so meritorious !"

Dohá 98.

After laving his feet, and drinking of the water, both himself and his family, and thus redeeming the souls of his fathers, he joyfully conveyed his lord across to the other side.

Chaupái.

They landed and stood on the sands of the Ganges, Síta, Ráma, Lakshman, and Guh. The ferryman landed too and made his obeisance. The lord was ashamed that he had nothing to give him. Síta knew what was passing in the mind of her beloved and cheerfully drew a jewelled ring from off her finger. Said the All-merciful: "Take your toll." The ferryman in distress clasped his feet: "What have I not already received, my lord ? sin, sorrow, poverty, and all their attendant ills have been removed. I have laboured for a length of years, but to-day God has given me my wages in full. Now, gracious lord, I ask for nothing but your favour ; at the time of your return, whatever you bestow upon me I will thankfully accept."

[1] As much as to say : We thought the Nishád king a pattern of piety, but even he is outdone by this rude ferryman.

[2] Ráma is here identified with Vishnu, who in the form of a dwarf outwitted king Bali : see note to page 17.

[3] From beneath which it had issued at its birth.

Dohá 99.

Lakshman and the lord both pressed him much, but the ferryman would take nothing; the All-merciful then dismissed him with the gift of unclouded faith, best of all boons.

Chaupái.

Then the lord of Raghu's line bathed and bowed his head in adoration to Mahádev:[1] while Síta with clasped hands thus addressed the sacred stream: "O mother, accomplish my desire that I may return in safety with my husband and his brother and again adore you." On hearing Síta's humble and affectionate speech, a favourable response came from the holy flood: "Hearken, Vaidehi, best beloved of Raghubír; who is there in the world who knows not your glory? they who behold you become as the sovereigns of the spheres, and all the powers of magic meekly do you service. In the petition that you have deigned to address to me, you have graciously paid me all too high an honour; yet, lady, unworthy as I am, I bestow upon you my blessing in order to prove my utterances true.

Dohá 100.

You shall return in safety to Kosala with your beloved and his brother; your every wish shall be accomplished, and your renown shall be spread throughout the world."

Chaupái.

On hearing Ganga's gracious speech, Síta was delighted to find it so propitious. Then said the lord to Guh: 'Return home.' At this his face grew wan and his bosom burned, and with clasped hands and in suppliant tones he cried: "Noblest of the sons of Raghu, hearken to my prayer. Let me remain with my lord to show the road and do him service for a day or two, and make a shapely hut of twigs for him in the wood where he goes to stay. After that I swear by Raghubír to do as he shall command me." Seeing his unfeigned affection, he took him with him to Guh's delight, who thereupon called all his kinsmen and dismissed them with kind assurances.

[1]The word in the text is *Párathi*, or in some manuscripts *Párthiva*, a derivative of *prithi*, 'the earth,' meaning a king, and here it would seem denoting Mahádev.

Dohá 101.

Then directing his intention to Ganes and Siva, and bowing his head to the Ganges, the lord with his companion and his brother and Síta took his way to the woods.

Chaupái.

That day he halted under a tree, and Lakshman and his attendant supplied all his necessities. At dawn, having performed his morning ablutions, he proceeded to visit the king of Tíraths. A king with truth for his minister, faith for his cherished consort, the god Mádhava[1] for his friend and favourite; his treasury stored with the four great prizes of life, and all holy places for his fair dominion; with an impregnable domain and magnificent forts, so strong that no enemy could ever dream of taking them; with an army of shrines of such virtue and power as to rout the whole army of Sin; with the meeting of the rivers for his glorious throne and the Akhay-bat for his royal umbrella, dazzling even the soul of a saint; with the waves of the Gangá and Jamuná for his *chauries*, a vision to disperse all sorrow and distress:

Dohá 102.

his attendants pure and holy anchorites, guerdoned with all they desire; his heralds, the Vedas and Puránas to declare his immaculate virtue.

Chaupái.

Who can tell the power of Prayág, a lion to destroy the elephantine monster Sin? On beholding the beauty of this king of sanctuaries, Raghubar, the ocean of delight, was delighted, and with his holy mouth he discoursed on its greatness to Síta, his brother and his companion. After making it an obeisance he visited the woods and groves, dilating on their virtue with the utmost devotion. So he came to the Tribeni—the mere thought of which confers all happiness—and after gazing upon it, rapturously bathed and paid homage to Siva and to the divinity of the spot, in all due form. Then came the lord to Bharadwája; as he prostrated himself at his feet, the saint took him to his breast in an ecstacy of joy past all telling, as though he had realized the perfect bliss of heaven.

[1] Veni-Mádhava is the name of the god worshipped as the tutelary divinity of Prayág.

Dohá 103.

The patriarch gave him his blessing with as much joy of heart as though God had set before him in visible form the reward of his virtue.

Chaupái.

After enquiring of his welfare, he conducted him to a seat and indulged his affection in doing him honour. Then he brought and presented roots, fruits, and herbs, all sweet as ambrosia, of which Ráma, with Síta, Lakshman, and their attendant, partook with much pleasure and content. Ráma was refreshed and all his fatigue forgotten. Then cried Bharadwája in complacent tones : "This day my penance, my pilgrimages, and my vigils have been rewarded; my prayers, my meditations, and my detachment from the world have to-day borne fruit; yea, all my pious practices have to-day, Ráma, been rewarded by the sight of you. This and nought else is the height of gain, the height of happiness ; in beholding you my every desire is satisfied. Now of your favour grant me this one boon, a life-long devotion to your lotus feet.

Dohá 104.

Until a man in heart, word, and deed, and without reserve becomes wholly yours, he cannot even dream of happiness, despite all that he may do."

Chaupái.

On hearing the saint's words Ráma was confused, yet revelled with delight in so exquisite a display of faith. Then proceeded he to declare unto them all in countless ways the saint's illustrious renown : "Great indeed and highly endowed is he, Holy Father, whom you are pleased to honour." Thus they bowed to one another, the saint and Raghubír, and were filled as they conversed with indescribable happiness. When the people of Prayág heard the news, all the religious students, ascetics, monks, hermits, and anchorites flocked to Bharadwája's cell to see the glorious son of Dasarath. All made their obeisance and rejoiced that their eyes had been so highly favoured. They blessed him and returned with exceeding joy, extolling his beauty.

Dohá 105.

Ráma rested for the night. At daybreak he bathed at Prayág, and then, after bowing his head to the saint, proceeded joyfully on his way with Síta, Lakshman, and his attendant.

Chaupái.

Ráma had affectionately asked the saint: "Tell me, my lord, by what road we should go." The saint replied with a smile: "All ways are easy to you," but called his disciples to go with him. They came with joy some fifty in number, all in their boundless love for Ráma declaring that they knew the road. The saint selected four students, who in many previous existences had done many good deeds. Then having bowed to the saint and received his permission to depart, Raghurái went forth rejoicing. When they had come out near to the village the men and women who all flocked to see them found in the sight of their lord the fruition of their life, and sadly turning home, sent their heart after him.

Dohá 106.

Courteously Ráma dismissed the disciples, who returned with their heart's desire obtained; then alighted and bathed in the stream of Jamuná, dark as his own body.

Chaupái.

The dwellers on the bank, when they heard of his arrival, left whatever they were doing and ran to see him. On beholding the beauty of Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta, they congratulated themselves on their good fortune, and all with longing heart began diffidently to ask their name and home. The sage elders of the party had wit enough to recognize Ráma, and related his whole history, and how he had come into the desert by his father's order. At this, they were all sad and complained: 'The king and queen have done ill.'[1] Men and women alike, on beholding the beauty of Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta, were agitated with love and pity:

[1] Here in some copies is found a whole additional stanza, which is said to exist also in the Rájapur MS. It may therefore have been written by Tulsi Dás; but if so, was probably afterwards cancelled by him. The lines contain nothing of any interest, and they fit in very awkwardly with the context. I therefore, like most of the native editors, prefer to omit them.

"What kind of father and mother must they be, friend, who have sent such children into the wood?"

Dohá 107.

Then Raghubír urgently exhorted his guide, who in submission to his commands took his way home.

Chaupái.

Again with clasped hands Síta, Ráma, and Lakshman made renewed obeisance to the Jamuná, and as they went on their way their talk was all of the daughter of the Sun and her glory. Many travellers met them on the way, and exclaimed, after gazing with affection at the two brothers: "You have all the marks of royalty on your person; on seeing them we are troubled at heart, for you go your way on foot, and the astrologers methinks are false. The road is difficult; the mountains and forests are very great; yet you have with you a delicate girl. Elephants and tigers make the woods too terrible to contemplate; with your permission, we will accompany you, will escort you as far as you please, and then make our bow and return."

Dohá 108.

As they proffered this request, their body trembled all over with excess of love, and their eyes filled with tears; but the All-merciful gently and courteously dismissed them.

Chaupái.

All the towns and villages along the road were the envy of the cities of the Serpents and the Gods: 'At what an auspicious moment and by what a holy man must they have been founded, to be so happy and blessed, and altogether highly favoured!' Whatever spot was trodden by Ráma's feet, Paradise was not to be compared to it. The dwellers by the wayside, of high desert, were the praise of the denizens of heaven, as they feasted their eyes on Síta and Lakshman and Ráma dark of hue as a storm-cloud. The ponds and rivers in which Ráma bathed were the envy of the lake and river of Heaven; the trees under which the Lord sat were magnified by the tree of life; and earth, touched by the dust of Ráma's lotus feet, thought her good fortune complete.

Dohá 109.

The clouds gave him shade, the exultant hosts of heaven rained down flowers, as Ráma proceeded on his way looking at the rocks and woods and birds and deer.

Chaupái.

Whenever Síta, Lakshman, and Raghurai came out near a village on the way, every one—young and old, man and woman—came directly they heard the news, forgetting their own private affairs, and as they gazed on their beauty obtained the fruition of their eyes and were made happy for ever. At the sight of the two heroes their eyes filled with tears, their body quivered with emotion, and they became all-enraptured, their state of mind as indescribable as though a beggar had discovered a pile of heavenly jewels. Every one was telling his neighbour: 'Now is the time to prove the value of sight.' One in his delight to see Ráma would go with him, gazing as he went; another, drawing his beautiful image into his heart by the way of his eyes, was utterly overpowered in body, soul, and speech.

Dohá 110.

One, seeing a fine shady fig-tree, would spread under it soft grass and leaves and cry: 'Rest a little after your fatigue, and proceed again either at once or at daybreak.'

Chaupái.

Another brought a jar full of water and tenderly besought him, 'Drink, my lord.' On hearing their affectionate speech and seeing their great devotion, the compassionate and most amiable Ráma, who moreover perceived that Síta was wearied, rested for a while in the shade of the fig-tree. All were enraptured with his beauty—men and women alike—and their soul was enamoured of his incomparable loveliness. Like a circle of partridges about his moon-like face, so fixed was their gaze. At the sight of his body, dark in hue as a young *tamál* tree, a myriad loves were fascinated; while Lakshman, all comely from head to foot, charmed the soul with his fair limbs, bright as the lightning; in his anchorite's dress, with his tightly-fitted quiver and bow, and arrows gleaming in his lotus hand.

Dohá 111.

With their hair done up in a knot as a crown upon their graceful heads, with broad chest, strong arms, and large deep eyes, with face like the autumnal full moon, glistening with beads of moisture,

Chaupái.

the loveliness of the two brothers is past all telling; it is boundless, and my wit is scant. With every faculty of mind and soul, they all gaze upon the beauteous trio; man and woman thirsting and faint with love, like deer dazed by a light. The village women drew near to Síta with tender and bashful enquiries, and, again and again embracing her feet, in their simplicity whispered the question: "Noble lady, we have a petition, but like women are afraid to make it. Pardon our presumption, madam, and be not offended by our country manners. These two charming young princes, from whom emerald and gold might borrow splendour,

Dohá 112.

the one dark, the other fair, but both beautiful and homes of delight, with face like the autumn moon, and eyes like the lotuses of autumn,

Chaupái.

that would put to shame a myriad loves, say, fair lady, how stand they to you?" On hearing their pleasant and loving speech, Síta smiled in modest confusion, and looking first at them and then at the earth was abashed—the pretty maid—with a double abashment. But drooping her fawn-like eyes, and with a voice sweet as the *koil's*, she lovingly replied: "The fair youth, so easy and graceful, is by name Lakshman, my younger brother-in-law; while he, the dark-complexioned, with the large eyes and arms, the all-beautiful with the gentle voice:" here veiling her moon-like face with the border of her robe she looked towards her husband, and arching her eyebrows with a side-long glance like a pretty *khanjan*,[1] thus by signs indicated to them her lord. All the village women were as delighted as beggars who have robbed a pile of jewels.

[1] The *khanjan* is a species of wagtail.

Dohá 113.

Falling at Síta's feet in their great affection, they invoked upon her every blessing: "May your happy wedded life last as long as Earth rests on the serpent's head.

Chaupái.

May you be as dear to your lord as Párvati to Síva. Yet, lady, cease not to have some regard for us: again and again with clasped hands we beseech you, if you return by this road, remember us your servants, and allow us to see you." Finding them all so athirst with love, Síta comforted them with many soothing words, as the lily is cheered by the moonlight. Then Lakshman, perceiving Raghubar's wish, gently asked the people the way. At his words they became sad, their limbs trembled, their eyes filled with tears, their joy was extinguished, and they were troubled at heart: "God has given us a treasure only to take it away again!" Then reflecting on the ways of Fate and taking courage, they fixed upon the easiest road and explained it to them.

Dohá 114.

Raghunáth took his way to the woods, and with him Lakshman and Jánaki; and they all returned home, but with many fond speeches and in heart accompanied them.

Chaupái.

Men and women alike on their way back lamented exceedingly and imputed blame to Fate, saying sadly to one another: "God's doings are all perverse. He is utterly uncontrollable, cruel, and remorseless; who has made the moon sickly and spotted, the tree of paradise a lifeless block, and the ocean all salt, and who now has sent these princely boys into the wilderness. If the woods are their proper abode, then for whom has he intended ease and pleasure? If they are to wander on their way barefooted, it is to no purpose that he has invented so many kinds of carriages. If they are to lie on the ground littered only with grass and leaves, for whom has God created comfortable couches? If he makes them live under the trees, why has he taken such pains to erect splendid palaces?

Dohá 115.

If such lovely and delicate children wear the rough dress and matted locks of anchorites, it is to no purpose that the great artificer has made so many kinds of dress and ornament.

Chaupái.

If they are to eat only fruits and herbs, all the delicacies of the world are thrown away." Said one: "They are so beautiful, they must have been spontaneously produced and not made by God at all. In all the works of God of which the Vedas speak, that either the ears can hear, or the eyes see, or the mind imagine, or the tongue tell—search and examine the whole fourteen spheres—where is there such a man, and where such a woman? When he saw them, God was so pleased that he essayed to make their match; but, after much labour, nothing came of it, and thus in spite he has sent and buried them in the woods." Said another: "I am no great scholar, but I account myself supremely happy; nay blessed are all, in my opinion, who see him, or have seen him, or shall see him."

Dohá 116.

With such affectionate discourse their eyes filled with tears: "How can they, who are so delicate, traverse so difficult a road?"

Chaupái.

All the women were made as uneasy by their love, as is the *chakwi* at evening time. As they thought upon their tender lotus feet, and the hardness of the road, they were distrest at heart and cried in plaintive tones: "At the touch of their soft and rosy feet, the very earth shrinks, as shrinks our heart. If the great God must send them to the woods, why did he not strew their path with flowers? If there be one boon that we may ask of Heaven and obtain, let it be, friend, that we keep them ever in our eyes." All the people who had not come in time, and thus had missed seeing Síta and Ráma, when they heard of their beauty, asked anxiously: 'How far, brother, will they have got by this time?' Those who were strong ran on and saw them, and returned with joy, having obtained the fruition of their eyes.

Dohá 117.

The women and children and the aged wrung their hands and lamented. In this manner, wherever Ráma went, the people were smitten with love.

Chaupái.

In every village was similar rejoicing at the sight of the moon of the lily-like solar race. Some who had learnt by hearsay of what had been going on, imputed blame to the king and queen: one said 'It was very good of the king to give our eyes such a treat.' Said others among themselves in simple and loving phrase: "Happy the father and mother who gave them birth, and happy the city from whence they came! Happy the hills and plains and woods and towns and every spot to which they come. Even the Creator who made them is pleased, nay, is absolutely in love with them." The delightful history of Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta thus spread over every road and forest.

Dohá 118.

In this manner the sun of the lotus-like solar race gladdened the people on the road, as with Síta and the son of Sumitrá he proceeded on his travels through the woods.

Chaupái.

Ráma walked in front, and Lakshman behind, conspicuous in the hermit's dress they wore; and between them both Síta shone resplendent, as Maya who connects the life of God with the life of the world. Or, to describe her beauty by another fancy, she seemed like Rati between Spring and Love; or, to ransack my mind for yet another simile, like the constellation Rohiní[1] between Budha and the Moon. As she went along the way Síta carefully planted her feet between the footprints of her lord; while Lakshman, avoiding the footprints of them both, set his own feet as he went to their right and left. The charming affection of all three was beyond all telling; how can I declare it? Birds and deer were fascinated at the sight of their beauty, and Ráma the wayfarer stole their heart.

[1]Rohiní is the ninth lunar asterism, personified as the daughter of Daksha and the favourite wife of the Moon. Budha is the planet Mercury.

Dohá 119.

All who beheld the dear travellers, Síta and the two brothers, joyously and without fatigue arrived at once at the end of the toilsome journey of life.

Chaupái.

And to this day any soul in which the vision of the wayfarers, Ráma, Síta, and Lakshman abides, finds the path that leads to Ráma's home, path that scarce a saint may find. Then Raghubír, knowing that Síta was tired, and observing a fig-tree close at hand and cool water, there rested and took some roots and fruits to eat, and after bathing at dawn again went on his way. Admiring the beauty of the woods and lakes and rocks, he arrived at Válmíki's hermitage. He found the saint's dwelling a charming spot, a lovely wooded hill with a spring of clear water, lotuses in the pond, the forest trees all in flower, with a delightful hum of bees drunk with sweets, and a joyous clamour of birds and beasts feeding happily and in peace together.

Dohá 120.

The Lotus-eyed was glad as he gazed upon the bright and fair retreat, and the saint on hearing of his arrival came forth to meet him.

Chaupái.

Ráma prostrated himself before him, as the holy man gave him his blessing. At the sight of Ráma's beauty, his eyes were rejoiced and he conducted him with all honour to his cell; there gave him a choice seat, as a guest dear to him as his own life, and sent for herbs and sweet fruits, of which Síta, Lakshman, and Ráma ate. Great was the joy of Válmíki's soul as his eyes beheld the image of bliss. Then folding his lotus hands, Ráma thus spoke in words to charm his ears: "King of sages, all time, past, present, and future, is in your ken, and the universe is like a little plum in the palm of your hand." So saying, the lord related to him the whole history and how the queen had banished him.

Dohá 121.

"My father's promise, my mother's schemes, my brother Bharat's coronation, and my own meeting with you, my lord, are all blessings that only past merit can have won for me.

Chaupái.

In beholding your feet, holy sir, all my good deeds are rewarded. Now, wherever it may be your order, and no anchorite be troubled—for those monarchs burn, even though there be no fire, who vex either saint or ascetic ; the satisfaction of a Bráhman is the root of all happiness, while his wrath consumes a thousand generations—tell me then some place to which I can go with Síta and Sumitra's son, and there build a pretty hut of grass and twigs and rest awhile, kind sir." On hearing his ingenuous speech, the all-wise seer exclaimed "True, true! It is only natural for you so to speak, pride of the Raghu line, guardian of the eternal bridge of Revelation.

Chhand 4.

Guardian of the bridge of Revelation, you, O Ráma, are the lord of the universe and Jánaki is Máyá, who at your gracious will creates, preserves, or destroys the world. And Lakshman is the thousand-headed serpent lord, the supporter of the world with all that it contains, living or lifeless, who in behalf of the gods has taken a kingly form and goes forth to rout the demon host.

Sorathá 4.

Your semblance, O Ráma, transcends speech and is beyond conception, all-pervading, unutterable, illimitable, undefinable even by the Scriptures.

Chaupái.

You look on at the drama of life, and Brahma, Hari, and Sambhu are your puppets. Even they know not your secret, and who else could discover you ? He only knows you to whom you have vouchsafed knowledge ; and he who knows you becomes one with you. It is by your grace, O Raghunandan, that your votaries learn to know you, soothing sandal-wood of the devout soul. Your body is pure intelligence and bliss, devoid of change, as they know who have found you. In behalf of the saints and the gods you have taken a human body and speak and act like an ordinary king. Fools are bewildered, but the wise rejoice, as they see or hear of your doings ; whatever you say or do is true, and we can only play such parts as you set us.

Dohá 122.

You ask of me 'Where can I stay?' but I ask with trembling, tell me where are you not, there will I assign you a place."

Chaupái.

On hearing the sage's affectionate words, Ráma was abashed and smiled to himself. Again Válmíki cried gaily in tones of honeyed sweetness: "Hearken, Ráma; I will now tell you the places where you and Síta and Lakshman should abide. They whose ears are like the ocean to catch the blessed streams of your traditions, and though ever replenished are never filled to the full, their heart shall be your chosen abode. They whose eyes long for your presence, as passionately as the chátak for the rain-cloud, and scorning the water of river, lake, or sea quench their thirst only in your beauty, their hearts are your glorious mansion; there abide, O Raghu-náyak, with Lakshman and Síta.

Dohá 123.

Whose tongue, like the swan in the clear hyperboreal lake of your renown, gathers up the pearls of your perfections; in his heart, Ráma, fix your home.

Chaupái.

They who ever reverently inhale the sweet and blessed odour of the offerings to their lord; who feed upon what has been offered to you; who wear only raiment and adornments first offered to you; who bow their heads when they see a god, a *guru*, or a Bráhman, and treat them with all honour and affection; whose hands are ever engaged in paying Ráma worship; who have no other hope but Ráma in their heart; and whose feet ever bear them to his shrines; be their soul, Ráma, your dwelling-place. They who are ever repeating your holy name, and adoring you with their family; who perform the varied rites of oblation and sacrifice; who feast Bráhmans and give them liberal donations; who regard their own *guru* even more than you, and serve him with all honour and affection,

Dohá 124.

who ask of all one only boon, devotion to Ráma; be their heart your temple wherein to abide, O Síta and you two brothers.

Chaupái.

Whoso is unmoved by lust, anger, pride, or arrogance, and is without covetousness, excitement, partiality, or malice, without fraud, hypocrisy, or heretical delusions; dwell in his heart, Raghuráya. They who are all men's friends, and are friendly to all; to whom pleasure and pain, praise and abuse are alike; who are careful to say what is both true and kind; who, whether sleeping or waking, place themselves under your protection and have no other way of salvation but you; in their heart, Ráma, abide. They who look upon another man's wife as their own mother, and another man's wealth as the deadliest poison, who rejoice to see a neighbour's prosperity and are grieved for his misfortunes; and to whom you, O Ráma, are dear as their own life; be their heart your auspicious abode.

Dohá 125.

To whom, my son, you are at once master and companion, father, mother, and spiritual guide; be their heart your temple, ye brothers twain, wherein with Síta to abide.

Chaupái.

They who pick out all men's good points and leave their bad; who endure troubles on behalf of Bráhmans and kine; and who are of note in the world for soundness of doctrine; in their heart be your chosen home. They who understand your righteousness and their own defects and fix all their hopes on you, and have an affection for all your worshippers; in their heart dwell, you and Síta. He who has left all, tribe, sect, wealth, hereditary religion, worldly advancement, friends, relations, home and all, and given himself wholly to you; in his heart take up your abode, Raghurái. To whom heaven and hell and release from transmigration are all alike, if only they can behold the god with his bow and arrows; and who in heart, word, and deed are your faithful slaves; be their heart, Ráma, your tabernacle.

Dohá 126.

They who never ask for anything but simply love you; in their heart abide for ever, for that is your very home."

Chaupái.

Such were the dwelling-places the sage indicated, and his loving speech pleased Ráma's soul. The saint continued : " Hearken, lord of the solar race; I will tell you a hermitage suitable for your present wants. Take up your abode on the hill of Chitra-kút ;[1] there you will have every convenience. It is a beautiful hill finely wooded, the haunt of elephants, tigers, deer, and birds. It has a sacred river mentioned in the Puránas, which the wife of Atri brought there by the power of penance.[2] It is called the Mandákini, and is a branch of the Ganges, as quick to drown sin as a witch to strangle an infant. Atri and other sages live there, engaged in meditation and prayer and wasting their body with penance. Go and bless their labours, Ráma, and confer dignity on the mountain."

Dohá 127.

All the glories of Chitra-kút did the great saint tell and declare. The two brothers and Síta proceeded to bathe in the sacred stream.

Chaupái.

Said Raghubar : " It is a good place, Lakshman ; now make arrangements for our stopping somewhere here." Lakshman then

[1]The sacred hill of Chitra-kút is one of a small group that forms the last spur of the great Vindhyan range. It is situated in the modern district of Bánda, close to the town of Karwi and about 60 miles from Prayág (Allahabad). A river flows at its base, now called the Paisuni (the Sanskrit Payoshni, 'warm as milk'), which has some fine waterfalls before it joins the Jamuná. The Mandákini, so frequently mentioned, is only a small tributary stream which enters the Paisuni near the village of Sitapur, where are a number of handsome temples. The hill is about three miles in circumference, and a narrow paved path runs the whole way round. This was constructed about 150 years ago by one of the Rájas of the neighbouring state of Panna for the convenience of pilgrims performing the ceremony of circumambulation. The two principal fête days are the Ram navami (Ráma's birthday) in the month of Chait, and the Diwáli in Kártik. About 20 miles from Chitra-kút on the bank of the Jamuná is the town of Rájapur, which was founded by Tulsi Dás, where he lived for several years, and where a manuscript of the Rámáyana in his own handwriting is still preserved. He imposed some curious restrictions upon the inhabitants of the place, which are still to this day religiously observed. No private houses, however wealthy the owners may be, are allowed to be built of any material but mud and wood, stone being reserved exclusively for the temples: and no barber, potter, or dancing-girl may live within the limits of the town ; when their services are required, they have to be called in from some other village.

[2]Anasúya, the wife of Atri, was one of Daksha's 24 daughters. She practised severe penance for ten thousand years, and by virtue of the religious merit that she had thus acquired she created the river Mandákini, and by its waters maintained the fertility of the country through a ten years' drought.

spied out the north bank : " The ravine bends round it like a bow, with the river for its string, asceticism and charity for its arrows, and all the sins of this evil age for its quarry, while Mount Chitra-kút is the huntsman of unerring aim striking at close quarters." So saying, Lakshman showed the spot ; when he had seen it, Raghupati was pleased. The gods learnt that Ráma was well content, and came with Indra at their head. In the garb of Kols and Kiráts they came and put up neat huts of boughs and grass, two of them, both prettier than words can tell, the one of larger size, the other a nice little cottage.

Dohá 128.

In his rustic cell the Lord, attended by Lakshman and Jánaki, shone forth as beautiful as Love in the dress of a hermit between Rati[1] and Spring.

Chaupái.

Then flocked to Chitra-kút gods, serpents, Kinnars, and Digpáls. All the immortals bowed low before Ráma and gazed with joy on that most longed-for vision. Showering down flowers and exclaiming " At length, O Lord, we have found our Lord," the heavenly host in piteous wise declared their intolerable distress, and joyfully started for their several homes. As soon as they heard the news of Raghunandan's stay at Chitra-kút, the saints sallied forth ; seeing the holy company draw near, Ráma prostrated himself before them : but they all took him to their bosom, and invoked upon him blessings,[2] knowing that they would be accomplished. As they beheld the beauty of Ráma and Síta and Sumitra's son, they accounted all their good deeds as well rewarded.

Dohá 129.

After all due honours paid, the Lord dismissed the saintly throng to practise contemplation, prayer, sacrifice and penance at pleasure in their own retreats.

[1] Rati is the Indian Venus.

[2] Their blessing could do Ráma no good, but its fulfilment would redound to their own credit, as showing them to be true prophets.

Chaupái.

When the Kols and Kiráts got the tidings they were as glad as if the nine treasures[1] had come to their house. With leaf platters full of herbs, roots, and fruits they ran like beggars scrambling for gold. Those among them who had already seen the two brothers were questioned about them by the others on the road. Telling and hearing Ráma's perfections, all came and saw him. Laying their offerings before him and making obeisance, their love increased exceedingly as they gazed upon their Lord. Motionless as figures in a picture, they stood about anyhow, their body thrilling with emotion and their eyes filled with tears. Ráma, perceiving that they were overwhelmed with affection, spoke to them words of kindness and received them with honour. Again and again bowing low before the Lord, they addressed him in humble strain with folded hands:

Dohá 130.

"Now at length that we have seen our Lord's feet, we have all found a protector; O prince of Kosala, what a blessing for us is your arrival.

Chaupái.

Happy land and forest and road and hill, where thou, my lord, hast planted thy foot: happy the birds and deer and beasts of the forest, whose life has been crowned by thy sight; happy we and all our kin, who have filled our eyes with thy vision. Thou hast chosen an excellent spot whereon to take up thy abode; here at all seasons of the year thou wilt live at ease. We will do thee service in every way, by driving away elephants, lions, snakes, and tigers. The thickets, ravines, mountains, chasms and caves have all, my lord, been explored by us foot by foot; we will take you to the different haunts of game, and point out to you the lakes and waterfalls and every other place. We and our people are thy servants; do not hesitate to command us."

[1] The nine *Nidhis*, or heavenly treasures of Kuvera, the god of wealth, are thus enumerated: the Padma, Mahá-padma, Sankha, Makara, Kachchhapa, Mukunda, Níla, Nanda, and Kharba; but their nature is not exactly defined, though some of them appear to be precious gems. According to the Tántrika system they are personified and worshipped as demigods, attendant either upon Kuvera, who is sometimes called *Nidhínám Adhipah*, 'lord of the Nidhis,' or upon Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity.—*Williams.*

Dohá 131.

The lord, whom the Veda cannot utter nor the saints comprehend, in his infinite compassion listened to the words of the Kiráts, as a father to the voice of a child.

Chaupái.

It is only love that Ráma loves ; understand this, ye who are men of understanding. He charmed all the foresters by his tender loving[1] speeches. Having taken leave and bowed the head, they set forth, and discoursing on the way of their Lord's perfections they reached their homes. In this fashion the two brothers and Síta dwelt in the forest, delighting gods and saints. From the time that Raghu-náyak took up his abode there, the wood became bounteous in blessings ; every kind of tree blossomed and bore fruit ; luxuriant creepers formed pleasant and beautiful canopies ; as though the tree of paradise in all its native loveliness had abandoned the groves of heaven. Strings of bees made a grateful buzzing, and a delicious air breathed soft, cool, and fragrant.

Dohá 132. .

Jays, cuckoos, parrots, *chátaks*, *chakwas*, *chakors*, and birds of every description charmed the ear and ravished the soul with their notes.

Chaupái.

Elephants, lions, monkeys, boars, and deer forgot their animosity and sported together. Enraptured above all were the herds of deer who beheld the beauty of Ráma as he tracked the chase. All the forests of the gods that there are in the world were envious at the sight of Ráma's forest. The Ganges, the Sarasvati, the sun-born Jamuná, the Narmada, daughter of Mount Mekal and the sacred Godávari, every river, stream, and torrent discoursed of the Mandákini. The mountains of the rising and the setting sun, Kailás, Mandar, Meru, home of all the gods, the crags of Himálaya, and all the hills there be, sang the glory of Chitra-kút. The delight of the gods was more than their soul could contain, to think it had won such renown without an effort.

[1] *Pariposhe*, 'abounding with,' 'fraught with,' is for the Sanskrit *paripushta*.

Dohá 133.

"Of highest merit and blessed indeed are all the birds, deer, creepers, trees and grasses of Chitra-kút," so day and night cried the gods.

Chaupái.

All creatures with eyes, who looked on Ráma, felt with delight that now they had lived to some purpose. Things without life, touched by the dust of his feet, were gladdened by promotion to the highest sphere. The woods and rocks, all charming in themselves, were so blissful, so entirely the holiest of the holy, that how can I declare their glory, when they became the abode of the infinitely blessed, and when leaving the Milky Ocean[1] and deserting Avadh, Síta, Ráma, and Lakshman had come there to live. The delights of the forest would be past telling even by a hundred thousand Seshnágs. How then can I describe them, any more than a common hole tortoise could uplift Mount Mandar. In every thought, word, and act Lakshman does him service, with an amiability and devotion more than can be told.

Dohá 134.

For ever gazing on the feet of Síta and Ráma and conscious of their love for him, not even in his sleep did Lakshman dream of absent kindred, or father, or mother, or home.

Chaupái.

In Ráma's company Síta lived so happy that she forgot all memory of city, family, and home. Ever watching the moon-like face of her beloved, she rejoiced like the partridge at night, and seeing her lord's affection daily increase, she was as happy as the cuckoo by day. Her heart was so enamoured of him that the forest was a thousand times as dear to her as Avadh; dear was the cottage with her love's society, dear were the fawns and birds, now her only attendants; like her husband's father and mother were the hermits and their wives, and sweet as ambrosia the wild fruits and roots. Shared with her lord, a litter of leaves[2] was a hundredfold

[1]Here Síta, Ráma, and Lakshman are all three regarded as incarnations of Vishnu, whose eternal home is the Milky Ocean.

[2]*Sáthari* is for the Sanskrit *Sastara*, 'made by strewing,' a bed of leaves.

more delightful than Cupid's own couch. How can material delights beguile him, the mere sight of whom confers the sovereignty of the spheres?

Dohá 135.

Remembering Ráma, men discard as no more worth than a blade of grass all the pleasures of sense; no wonder then in Síta's case, Ráma's own beloved, the mother of the world.

Chaupái.

Anything that would please Síta and Lakshman, that would Raghunáth do, exactly as they suggested. He would recite legends and tales of olden times, on the hearing of which Lakshman and Síta took great delight. If ever he made mention of Avadh, his eyes filled with tears; as he called to mind his father and mother, his family and his brother, with all Bharat's affection and amiable attentions, the compassionate Lord grew most sad, but restrained himself, knowing that the time was out of joint. At the sight Síta and Lakshman became distressed also, like the shadow that follows a man. When Raghunandan noticed the emotion of his spouse and his brother, being self-restrained and tender and as soothing to his votaries as sandal-wood when applied to the breast, he would begin to relate some sacred story to divert them.

Dohá 136.

Ráma and Lakshman with Síta in their leafy hut were as resplendent as Indra in the city of heaven with his spouse Sachi and their son Jayanta.

Chaupái.

The Lord was as watchful over Síta and his younger brother as the eyelids over the pupil of the eye; while Lakshman was as careful of Síta and Raghubír as a fool of his own body. Thus happily the Lord lived in the woods, gratifying alike birds, beasts, and pious ascetics. I have now told the story of Ráma's exile to the woods; hear how Sumanta reached Avadh. The Nishád returned after escorting his Lord, and came in sight of the minister and the chariot. No words can tell the distress with which he found the minister to be agonized. Crying out "Ráma, Ráma, Síta,

Lakshman," he had fallen to the ground utterly overpowered, while the horses kept on looking to the south[1] and neighing as piteously as a bird that has lost its wings.

Dohá 137.

They would neither eat grass nor drink water, and their eyes shed tears. At the sight of Ráma's horses all the Nisháds were deeply grieved.

Chaupái.

At length summoning up courage the Nishád said: "Now, Sumanta, cease mourning; you are a learned man and a philosopher, submit patiently to adverse fortune." With such kindly expostulations he made him mount the chariot, whether he would or no; but he was so unstrung by grief that he could not drive, his heart ached so grievously for Ráma's loss. The horses reared and would not go; you would think they were wild deer put in harness, jibbing, lying down, and turning to look behind them, being overcome by sore pain for Ráma's loss. If any one mentioned the name of Ráma, Lakshman, or Síta, the horses would at once neigh and look at him; the way in which they declared their grief is not to be described, like a snake that has lost its head-jewel.

Dohá 138.

The sight of the minister and the horses made the Nishád very sad. He told off four trusty grooms and with them a charioteer.

Chaupái.

After making over the charioteer, Guha returned home, more sorry at leaving than words can tell. The Nisháds drove off to Avadh; sunk every moment in deeper distress, Sumanta, tortured by regrets, a prey to woe, cried "A curse for life without Raghubír! This vile body must perish at last; it lost all glory when bereft of Raghubír and became a sink of infamy and crime; why does it not take its departure? Ah! fool that it is, it missed its opportunity, seeing that to-day my heart has not broken in twain." Wringing his hands and beating his head in his remorse he went

[1] Hoping, as Rá na had gone to the south, to get the first glimpse of him coming back ag«in from that direction

his way like a miser robbed of his pelf, or like a warrior of high renown, some famous champion who has had to flee from the battle-field.

Dohá 139.

The minister's grief was like that of some learned Bráhman well read in the Vedas, a man of good repute, of integrity and birth, who has been entrapped into drinking.

Chaupái.

Or like some well-born, virtuous, and discreet lady, who is entirely devoted to her lord, but whom Fate has forced to desert him; such was the cruel torture that racked the minister's heart. His eyes so full of tears that he could scarcely see; his ears deaf, his senses all confused, his lips dry, his tongue cleaving to his palate, the breath of life only restrained by the bar of Ráma's promise to return; all the colour gone from his face, he looked like one who had murdered his father and mother. His soul was so possessed with the greatness of his loss and his remorse that he might be some grievous sinner trembling at the gate of death. Words would not come, but to himself he moaned: "How can I look Avadh in the face? when they see the chariot and no Ráma in it, they will turn in bewilderment to me.

Dohá 140.

When the agitated citizens run to question me and I have to answer them, my heart will be cleft asunder as by a thunder-bolt.

Chaupái.

When the piteous queen-mothers ask of me, Good God! what shall I say to them? When Lakshman's mother questions me, what good news can I tell her? When Ráma's mother comes running, like a cow mindful of its new-weaned calf, and questions me, I can only answer, Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta have gone into the forest. Whoever asks, I must answer so: this is the treat I shall have at Avadh. When the sorrowful king, whose life hangs upon Ráma, questions me, with what face can I answer him, 'I have seen the princes safe to their journey's end and come back.'

When the king hears the news of Lakshman, Síta, and Ráma, he will discard his life as not worth a straw.

Dohá 141.

My heart bereft of its beloved is like clay drained of water, but it cracks not: now I know how capable of torture is this body that God has given me."

Chaupái.

Thus bemoaning himself as he went, he quickly arrived in his chariot at the bank of the Tamasá. There he courteously dismissed the Nisháds, who after falling at his feet turned sorrowfully away. The minister was as downcast on entering the city as one who had killed his own spiritual guide, or a Bráhman or cow. He passed the day sitting under a tree, and at eventide took the opportunity to enter Avadh in the dark. He slunk into his house, leaving the chariot at the gate. All who heard the tidings came to the king's door to see the chariot, and having recognized it and observed the distress of the horses, their body melted away like hail in the sun. All the citizens were as woe-begone as fish when the waters are dried up.

Dohá 142.

When they heard of the minister's arrival, all the ladies of the court were agitated. The palace struck him with as much dread as a haunted chamber.

Chaupái.

All the queens questioned him in great excitement; no answer came, his voice was all broken. With no ears to hear nor eyes to see, he could only ask every one he met, 'Tell me where is the king.' Seeing his confusion, the handmaidens conducted him to Kausalya's apartments. On entering, Sumanta found the king in such state as the moon shows when all its lustre has waned. Fasting, sleepless, stript of every adornment, he lay on the ground in utter wretchedness, sighing as piteously as Yayáti[1] after he had

[1]Yayáti as a reward for his many sacrifices was exalted to heaven. There Indra met him, ceremoniously conducted him to the throne, and then craftily drew him out to speak of all the meritorious acts he had done. The more he boasted, the more his virtue evaporated, till at last he was left without any merit at all. The gods then turned him out of heaven and Indra was able to resume the vacant throne.

been hurled from heaven, his heart every moment bursting with grief, like Sampáti[1] falling with singed wings, fondly crying 'Ráma, Ráma, Ráma,' and again 'Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta.'

Dohá 143.

The minister on seeing him cried 'All hail!' and bowed to the ground. At the sound of his voice the king started up hurriedly and exclaimed 'O Sumanta, where is Ráma?'

Chaupái.

The king clasped Sumanta to his bosom, like a drowning man who has caught hold of some support. He seated him affectionately by his side, and with his eyes full of tears asked: "Tell me, kind friend, of Ráma's welfare: where are Raghunáth, Lakshman, and Síta? Have you brought them back, or have they sought the forest?" At these words the minister's eyes streamed with tears. Overpowered by anxiety, the king asked again: 'Give me tidings of Síta, Ráma, and Lakshman.' Calling to mind Ráma's beauty and talents and amiability, he sorrowed yet more: "I promised him the kingdom and then imposed exile; he obeyed with soul unmoved either by joy or sorrow. Bereft of such a son I yet can live: who so guilty a monster as I?

Dohá 144.

Take me, my friend, to the place where Ráma, Síta, and Lakshman are. If not, I tell you the very truth, my soul will take flight at once."

Chaupái.

Again and again he implored him: "Friend, tell me of my son. Hearken, comrade; contrive some means for speedily showing me Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta." Summoning up courage the minister gently replied: "Sire, your maj esty is a scholar and philosopher, a model of courage and endurance, and a constan tattendant of holy assemblies. Life and death; pleasure, pain, and all enjoyments; loss and gain; the society of friends and their loss; all, sir, are governed by time and fate as unalterably as the succession of night and day. Fools triumph in prosperity, are downcast in adversity; wise men account both alike. Consider the matter wisely

[1]The mention of Sampáti here is rather an anachronism, as it was not till long after Dasarath's death that he lost his wings.

and take courage: the good of all depends upon you; cease vain regrets.

Dohá 145.

Their first halt was at the Tamasá; their second on the bank of the Ganges, where the two heroes and Síta bathed and stayed to drink water.

Chaupái.

The boatmen showed them great courtesy and they passed the night at Sringavera. At daybreak they called for milk of the fig-tree and fastened up the hair of their head into a crown-like top-knot. Then Ráma's friend called for the boat, and after putting his beloved on board, Ráma himself followed, and after him, by his Lord's permission, Lakshman too climbed the boat, equipt with bow and arrows. Seeing my distress, Raghubír restrained his emotion and addressed me thus kindly: 'Father, give my salutation to my father, and again and again embrace his lotus feet.' There at his feet entreat him with all humility, saying, 'Father, mourn not for me; my banishment to the forest is pleasant and profitable to myself, and on your part is a grace, a favour, and a meritorious deed.

Chhand 5.

By your favour, father, I go to the forest, there to enjoy complete happiness. After fulfilling your command, I shall return again in safety to behold your feet.' Next falling at the feet of each of the queen-mothers, console and implore them to make every effort that Kosala's king may live happy.

Soratha 5.

Again and again clasping the lotus feet of my spiritual instructor, give him this my message: 'So exhort the king that he may cease to sorrow on my account.'

Chaupái.

Bowing down before all the citizens and the people of the court make known to them, sir, this my petition: 'He is my best friend who ensures the king's happiness.' Say to Bharat, too, when he comes, 'Now that you have obtained the royal dignity, forget not sound polity. Cherish your subjects in word, thought, and deed, and be obedient to all the queen-mothers without partiality. Fulfil your duty, brother, as a brother, and in dutifulness to father,

mother, and kindred, and take such care of the king, sir, that he may never regret me.' Lakshman gave vent to some angry words, but Ráma checked him, and begged of me again and again, adjuring me by himself, not to mention his childishness.

Dohá 146.

Síta sent her reverence, and would have said more, but was unable; her voice faltered, her eyes filled with tears, and her body quivered with emotion.

Chaupái.

Then it was that at a sign from Raghubar the boatman propelled the boat to the opposite side. In this manner the glory of Raghu's line went his way, and I stood looking on with a heart as of adamant. How can I describe my own anguish, who have come back alive, bearing Ráma's message?" With these words the minister stopped speaking, being overpowered by affliction, remorse, and distress. When he had heard Sumanta's speech, the king fell to the ground, heart-broken with grief, and in a wild phrenzy of soul writhed like a fish in the scour of a turbid stream.[1] All the queens wept and made lamentation; how can I describe so great a calamity? at the sound of their wailings sorrow itself grew sorrowful, and endurance could no more endure.

Dohá 147.

Avadh was in a tumult at the sound of the outcry in the king's palace; as when a cruel thunderbolt has fallen at night in some dense forest full of birds.

Chaupái.

The breath of life flickered at the king's mouth, forlorn as a snake robbed of its jewel; all his senses as heavy smitten, as

[1]This simile, as noted at page 30, has puzzled many of the commentators, who are ordinarily grammarians rather than observers of nature. It is well illustrated and explained by a letter in the *Pioneer* of August 5th, 1878, from a correspondent at Mirzapur. He writes as follows:—"We observed a curious phenomenon here which seems worth recording. Early on Friday morning huge quantities of fish of every description were seen coming to the surface all along both banks of the river, gasping and dying. The people living near the sides flocked down and clubbed and secured very many. . . . . Before many hours all the fish susceptible to whatever influence was at work seem to have perished, and in the afternoon they rose to the surface and floated past in a state of decomposition. The river is in high but not full flood. The water, probably on account of the prolonged drought, is intensely and abnormally turbid. It is to this peculiarity I attribute the death of the fish. The particles of earth held in suspense have impregnated the gills and stopped breathing."

the lotuses in a lake that has been drained of its water. When Kausalyá saw the king's misery—the sun of the solar race setting as it were at noon—Ráma's mother summoned up courage and spoke in words befitting the occasion: "Consider, my lord, and reflect that Ráma's exile is like the vast ocean, you are the helmsman of the good ship Avadh, and your friends are the merchants, its passengers; if you have courage you will get across; if not, the whole family will be drowned. Take to heart this entreaty of mine, my spouse, and you will yet see again Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta."

Dohá 148.

Hearing these tender words from his beloved, the king opened his eyes and looked up, writhing like some hapless fish when sprinkled with cold water.

Chaupái.

The king with an effort sat up: "Tell me, Sumanta, where is my generous Ráma? Where is Lakshman? Where my loving Ráma? Where my dear daughter-in-law, the princess of Videha?" Thus miserably moaning, the night seemed an age long and as though it never would end. The blind hermit's curse[1] came back to his mind, and he told the whole story to Kausalyá. As he related the circumstances his agitation increased: "Bereft as I am of Ráma, I have done with life and hope; why should I cherish a body that has failed to fulfil my love's engagement? Ah, Raghunandan, dearer to me than life, already I have lived too long without you. Ah, Jánaki and Lakshman! Ah, Raghúbar! the rain-cloud of a fond father's *chátak*-like heart."

Dohá 149.

Crying 'Ráma, Ráma!' and again 'Ráma!' and yet once more 'Ráma, Ráma, Ráma!' the king's soul, bereft of Raghubar, quitted his body and entered heaven.

[1]The incident to which such brief allusion is here made is told at full length in the Sanskrit Rámáyana, where it occupies nearly 200 lines. One day, when Dasarath was still a youth, he was out shooting, and had taken up a position near the bank of the Sarju, where he hoped to get a shot at some tiger or buffalo as it came down in the evening to the river to drink. Hearing a splash in the water, he let fly an arrow. From the cry that followed he learnt to his dismay that he had shot a young hermit, who had been filling his pitcher for the use of his blind and aged parents. His dying words were to implore the king that he would carry the water to the hermitage and inform the bereaved couple of their son's sad fate. He did so, and was told that as a punishment for his crime he too should hereafter die of grief for the loss of a son. The time should be far distant, because the blow was dealt unwittingly, and his confession had further lightened his guilt; had he concealed the deed, he and the whole of his line had perished for ever.

Chaupái.

Thus Dasarath reaped his reward both in life and death, and his spotless fame has spread through countless cycles of creation. In life he saw Ráma's moon-like face, and dying for his loss had a glorious death. All the queens bewept him in an agony of grief, and spoke of his beauty, his amiability, his power and majesty. They made manifold lamentation, throwing themselves upon the ground again and again. Men-servants and maid-servants sadly bemoaned him; and there was weeping in every house throughout the city: "To-day has set the sun of the solar race, the perfection of justice, the treasury of all good qualities." All reviled Kaikeyi, who had robbed the world of its very eyes. In this manner the night was spent in lamentations till all the great and learned sages arrived.

Dohá 150.

Then the holy Vasishtha recited many legends befitting the time, and checked their grief by the wisdom that he displayed.

Chaupái.

After filling a boat with oil and putting the king's body in it, he summoned messengers and thus addressed them: "Hasten with all speed to Bharat, and say nothing to anybody about the king; only tell Bharat when you arrive 'The guru has sent for you two brothers.'" On receiving the saint's orders, they ran off at once with speed that would shame the fleetest of horses. Directly these troubles had begun at Avadh Bharat was visited with evil omens; he saw fearful visions in his sleep by night, and on awaking formed all sorts of ill conjectures. He daily feasted Bráhmans and gave alms, and with elaborate ritual poured water over the emblem of Mahádev, and with heartfelt prayers implored the god for the prosperity of his parents, his family, and his brethren.

Dohá 151.

In this state of anxiety was Bharat found by the heralds on their arrival. As soon as he had heard his guru's commands he offered up a prayer to Ganes and started.

Chaupái.

They went with the speed of the wind, urging on their horses over rivers, rocks, and trackless forests. So great was his distress of mind that nothing pleased him ; he thought to himself, ' O that I had wings to fly !' A moment seemed like a year. In this manner Bharat drew near to the city. On entering, he was met by evil omens. Gruesome noises sounded in uncanny places, asses and jackals uttered presages of ill, which pierced him to the heart as he listened. Even the lakes and rivers, groves and gardens seemed forlorn; while the city struck him as more melancholy still. Birds, deer, horses, and elephants were painful to look at, as though the loss of Ráma were some dreadful disease that had destroyed them. The citizens were as downcast as if they had all lost everything they had in the world.

Dohá 152.

The people who met him did not speak, but bowed and passed on. For the fear and dismay in his mind Bharat could not ask ' Is all well ?'

Chaupái.

The market-places and streets were as dreary as though the city had been the prey of a general conflagration. When Kaikeyi heard of her son's approach, the moon of the lotus-like solar race rejoiced. She sprang up gladly and ran with lamp in hand and met him at the door and brought him in. Bharat saw all the household as woe-begone as a bed of lotus when smitten by the frost, his mother as jubilant as a wild hill-woman who has set the forest in a blaze. Seeing her son sad and distressed, she asked ' Is all well in my mother's house ? ' Bharat assured her that all was well, and then asked after the welfare of his own family : " Say, where is my father and where the other queen-mothers ? where is Síta and my dear brothers, Ráma and Lakshman ?"

Dohá 153.

On hearing her son's loving speech the guilty woman's eyes filled with false tears, and she replied in words that pierced Bharat's ears and soul :

Chaupái.

"My son, I had arranged everything with the help of poor[1] Manthará, but God somehow spoilt my plan half-way. The king has gone to heaven." On hearing this Bharat was overcome with distress, like an elephant at the roar of a lion. Crying 'My father, my father, alas, my father!' he fell upon the ground in grievous affliction. "I could not see you at leaving, father, nor did you commend me to Ráma." Again, with an effort, he collected himself and got up: "Tell me, mother, the cause of my father's death." On hearing her son's words Kaikeyi replied, as one who drops poison into a wound, and with a glad heart, vile wretch that she was, recounted all that she had done from the very beginning.

Dohá 154.

Bharat forgot his father's death when he heard of Ráma's banishment, and knowing himself to be the cause he was staggered and remained speechless.

Chaupái.

Seeing her son's distress she comforted him, in such manner as when one applies salt to a burn—"The king, my boy, is no fit subject for lamentation; he won glory and renown and lived happily. In his life he reaped all life's rewards, and in the end has entered the court of heaven. Regard the matter in this light and banish grief; in state assume the sovereignty of the realm." The prince shrunk exceedingly at her words, as though cautery had been applied to a festered wound; then collecting himself he gave a deep sigh: "Wretched woman, the ruin of us all! if this was your vile desire, why did you not kill me at my birth? After cutting down a tree you water the branches and drain a pond to keep the fish alive.

Dohá 155.

Born of the solar race, with Dasarath for my father and Ráma and Lakshman for my brothers, I have had you, mother, for a mother: what can be done against Fate?

[1] *Bichári* is here for the Persian word *bechára*. The Hindu commentator explains it by *chára-rahitá!*

Chaupái.

Wretch! when you formed such an evil design in your mind, how was it your heart did not break in pieces? When you asked the boon, your soul felt no pain, your tongue did not burn, nor your mouth fester! How could the king trust you? his hour of death had come, and God had robbed him of his senses. Not even God knows the ways of a woman's heart; such a mine is it of all deceit, crime, and sin. The king was so simple, good, and pious: what did he know of woman's nature? Is there any living creature in the world who loves not Raghunáth like himself? Yet he was your special enemy. Tell me the truth, what are you? Whatever you may be, you have blackened your own face: up, hence out of my sight.

Dohá 156.

God has created me out of a womb hostile to Ráma; who so guilty a wretch as I? but it is useless for me to say anything to you."

Chaupái.

When Satrughna heard of his mother's wickedness he burned all over, his anger was beyond control. At that very moment Humpback came up, dressed out in fine attire and many jewels. On seeing her Lakshman's young brother was filled with passion, like fire upon which butter has been poured. He sprung forward and struck her such a blow on her hump that she fell flat on her face and screamed aloud. Her hump was smashed, her head split, her teeth broken, and her mouth streamed with blood. "Ah! my God! what harm have I done? this is an ill reward for all my services!" Then Satrughna, seeing her so all vile from head to foot, seized her by the hair of the head and began dragging her about, till the merciful Bharat rescued her. Both brothers then went to Kausalyá.

Dohá 157.

In sordid attire, pale, agitated, with wasted frame and soul opprest with woe, she seemed some lovely creeper or golden lotus smitten by the frost.

Chaupái.

When the queen saw Bharat she sprang up in haste, but fell swooning to the ground overtaken with giddiness. At this sight Bharat was grievously distrest, and threw himself at her feet, forgetting his own condition: "Mother, let me see my father; where is Síta, and where Ráma and Lakshman, my two brothers? Why was Kaikeyi born into the world? or if born, why was she not barren instead of bearing me to disgrace the family, a very sink of infamy, the curse of my home? Who in the three spheres is so wretched as I am, on whose account, mother, you have been brought to this plight? My father dead, Ráma banished, and I alone the cause of all this calamity! Woe is me, a very fire amongst the reeds, fraught with intolerable torment, anguish, and offence."

Dohá 158.

Hearing Bharat speak so tenderly, his mother again took courage and arose and lifted him up and clasped him to her bosom, while she wiped the tears from his eyes.

Chaupái.

Simple and kind, she took him to her heart as lovingly as though Ráma himself had come back. Then Lakshman's young brother was also embraced, while her soul overflowed with sorrow and affection. All who witnessed her kindness said: "She is Ráma's mother, it is natural to her." Seating Bharat in her lap, she wiped away his tears and said soothingly: "Now, my child, I adjure you to compose yourself; reflect that the times are evil and cease to lament. Think no more of your loss and vexation; remember that the course of time and fate is unalterable. Do not attach blame to any one, my son; it is God who has set himself against me. He has made me live through such distress; who knows what may be his pleasure with me now?

Dohá 159.

At his father's command Raghubír put aside his ornaments and ordinary attire and assumed the bark dress without either dismay or exultation.

Chaupái.

With a cheerful countenance and a soul unmoved by anger or attachment, he did all in his power to comfort us. Síta hearing he was off to the forest, went too ; in her devotion to Ráma's feet she could not stay. Lakshman also, when he heard the news, rose up to accompany him, and for all Ráma's persuasions would not remain behind. Then Raghupati bowed his head to all in turn and set out accompanied by Síta and his younger brother. Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta went thus into exile. I neither joined them, nor sent my spirit after them. All this took place before my eyes, and yet—wretch that I am—life did not leave my body. I felt no shame with all my love, with such a son as Ráma and myself his mother. The king knew well the time to live, and the time to die ; but my heart is a hundredfold harder than adamant."

Dohá 160.

Hearing Kausalyá's words, Bharat and all the seraglio made woeful lamentation : the palace seemed the very home of affliction.

Chaupái.

Bharat, nay, both brothers, wept piteously. Kausalyá clasped them to her bosom, and comforted Bharat in every way with words of excellent wisdom. With appropriate maxims from the Puránas and Vedas all the queens reasoned with Bharat. And he, pure, guileless, and sincere, made fitting answer thus with clasped hands : "The crime of slaying father, mother, or guru ; of burning cows in their stalls or a city of Bráhmans ; the crime of murdering wife or child ; of poisoning a friend or a king ; every mortal or venial sin, of thought, word, and deed, as enumerated by the seers ; may all these sins be mine, O God, if this, mother, was a plot of mine.

Dohá 161.

May God award me the fate of those who forsake the feet of Hari and Hara and worship abominable demons, if, mother, this was any plot of mine.

Chaupái.

Those who sell the Veda and trade on piety; backbiters, who talk of other's faults; the treacherous, the perverse, the litigious, the violent; the revilers of the Veda, the enemies of all creation; the covetous, the lecherous, the fickle, the boastful,[1] who covet their neighbour's wealth or their neighbour's wife; may I come to a like ill end with them if, mother, this plot had my consent. The wretches who have no regard for the example of the good, who reject the way of salvation, who worship not the incarnation of Hari, and take no delight in the glory of Hari and Hara, who abandon the path of Scripture and follow a contrary road, who by knavish disguise impose upon the world; may Sankara allot me a fate like theirs if, mother, I knew of this plot.

Chhand 6.

Hearken, mother; in all my thoughts, words, and deeds I am the slave of the All-merciful. The omniscient Ráma dwells in my heart and discerns perfectly between true affection and feigned." As he thus spoke, his eyes streamed with tears, his body quivered, and his toes drew lines upon the ground. Again his mother took and clasped him to her bosom, knowing him to be indeed a votary of Ráma's.

Dohá 162.

Hearing Bharat's true and honest and generous words, his mother exclaimed: "Son, you have ever in thought, word, and deed been Ráma's friend.

Chaupái.

Ráma is the very life of your life, and you are dearer than life to him. The moon may drop poison, ice distil fire, fish avoid water, a sage never cease from folly; but you could never become Ráma's enemy. If any one in the world says this was of your contriving, he shall never even in his sleep have any peace or happiness." With these words his mother took Bharat to her arms, while her breasts dropped milk and her eyes filled with tears. As they sat and made such long lamentation, the whole night was spent. Saints

[1]For the two words *lolá, lawárá, lolupawárá* would seem a preferable reading, if there were any manuscript to support it.

Vámadev and Vasishtha came and summoned all the ministers and nobles, and did everything to console Bharat by appropriate discourse on religious topics.

Dohá 163.

"Son, take heart and perform the duties of the day." Bharat arose at the guru's command and ordered everything to be done.

Chaupái.

As directed in the Veda, he had the body of the king washed and a sumptuous funeral car prepared. Then clasping the feet of each of the queens he bid them stay.[1] They stayed in the hope of seeing Ráma. Many loads of sandal-wood and aloes were brought and immense quantities of sweet-scented spices. The pile was raised on the bank of the Sarju like a fair ladder reaching to heaven. So all the rites of cremation were accomplished; the prescribed bathing, the oblation of sesamum seeds, the ceremony of the ten balls of rice,[2] which Bharat performed after due study of the Vedas, the Puránas, and the Code of Ritual. Whatever order was given at any time by the great sage was thereupon executed accordingly a thousand times over. For his purification he gave abundant gifts; cows, horses, elephants, all kinds of carriages,

Dohá 164.

thrones, jewels, robes, grain, lands, money, and houses did Bharat take and present to the Bráhmans: their every wish was gratified.

Chaupái.

All the ceremonies that Bharat performed on his father's account were more than a million tongues could tell. Then came the great sages, after determining an auspicious day, and summoned all the nobles and ministers, who went and sat down in the royal council chamber, where they sent and summoned Bharat and his brother. Vasishtha seated Bharat by his side and addressed him in

[1]That is to say, he would not allow them to ascend the funeral pile with the body of the king and perish with him as Satis.

[2]One ball is offered on the first day, two on the second, and so on till the tenth, when the ceremony is complete.

words full of wisdom and piety. First the holy man repeated the whole history of Kaikeyi's monstrous doings and extolled the king for his piety and faithfulness to his promise, who by his death had manifested his love. As he spoke of Ráma's good qualities and amiable disposition, the saint's eyes filled with tears and his body quivered with emotion. As he went on to tell of the affection shown by Lakshman and Síta, the ascetic sage was drowned in love and grief.

Dohá 165.

"Hearken, Bharat"—thus sadly spoke the prince of sages—"Fate is over-strong; loss and gain, life and death, honour and dishonour are in God's hands.

Chaupái.

Having so considered, why blame any one, or why be angry with any without cause? Ponder this in your heart, my son; king Dasarath is not to be pitied. Pitiable the Bráhman who is ignorant of the Veda and has abandoned his faith and become absorbed in the delights of sense; pitiable the king who knows not the principles of government and to whom his subjects are not as dear as his own life; pitiable the merchant, miserly and rich, who regards not the duties of hospitality nor the service of Mahádev; pitiable the Súdra who insults a Bráhman, who is boastful, ambitious, and proud of his knowledge; pitiable again the wife who deceives her own husband, and who is perverse, quarrelsome, and self-willed; pitiable the religious student who breaks his vows and obeys not the commands of his *guru*;

Dohá 166.

pitiable the householder who, overcome by delusion, forsakes the path of religion; pitiable the ascetic who is enamoured of the world and has lost his judgment and self-governance;

Chaupái.

pitiable the anchorite who has given up penance and takes delight in pleasure; pitiable the backbiter and the angry without a cause, the enemies of their own parents, their spiritual guide, and their kinsmen; pitiable in every way is the malevolent who

cherishes self and is utterly merciless ; pitiable in every way is he who does not eschew guile and become a follower of Hari ; but the king of Kosala is not to be pitied ; his glory is spread abroad through the fourteen spheres. There neither has been, nor is now, nor shall be hereafter, a king like your father, Bharat. Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Indra, and all the Regents of the air sing the virtues of Dasarath.

Dohá 167.

Tell me, my son, in what way can any one magnify him, who has such noble sons as Ráma, Lakshman, you, and Satrughna ?

Chaupái.

The king is altogether fortunate ; it is vain to lament on his account. Thus hearing and considering, cease from grief ; obediently submit to the royal commands. The king has given you the throne, and you must needs fulfil your father's word. The monarch who for the sake of his word abandoned Ráma, though in the anguish of separation from Ráma he lost his life, and who thus held his word dearer than life, is a father, my son, whose word must be obeyed. Bow your head to the royal command ; it will be in every way for your good. Parasurám, to obey his father's order, slew his own mother, as all the world bears witness ; and Yayáti's son gave him up his youth ;[1] in a father's order there can be no sin nor disgrace.

Dohá 168.

They who cherish their father's words, without discussing right or wrong, they are vessels of honour and glory and dwell in the palace of the king of heaven.

[1]The legend of Yayáti is thus given in the Vishnu Purána, IV. 10:—He was the second son of king Nahusha and succeeded to his father's throne. He had two wives, Devayáni, the daughter of Usanas (also called Sukrachárya, the preceptor of the Daityas), and Sarmishtha, the daughter of Vrishaparvan, king of the Dánavas. Having been cursed by Usanas, whose daughter had complained to him of her husband's infidelity, he became old and infirm before his time, but was allowed to transfer his decrepitude to any one who would consent to take it. Four of his sons, to whom he successively applied for relief, refused to grant it, and received in consequence their father's curse, that none of their posterity should possess dominion. But when he made the same request of his fifth and youngest son, Púru, he at once consented to give up his youth and receive in exchange his father's infirmities. After some years of enjoyment Yayáti himself withdrew to a hermitage in the woods, and resigned the throne to Púru, whom he appointed supreme monarch of the world, making his elder brothers his viceroys under him.

Chaupái.

You must certainly make good the king's word ; cherish your subjects and cease to grieve. He will receive comfort in heaven ; for you it will be a merit and an honour, and no fault. It is laid down in the Veda, and approved by all men, that he takes the crown to whom the father gives it. Reign then, nor further distress yourself, but accept my advice as the best for you. Ráma and Síta will rejoice when they hear of it, and no wise man will call it wrong. Kausalyá and all the queens will be happy in the happiness of the people : Ráma knows your secret thoughts and will take it quite in good part ; on his return you can deliver up the throne and serve him with cheerful affection."

Dohá 169.

The ministers with clasped hands exclaimed : " You must needs obey your guru's command : when Raghupati returns you can then do as shall seem good."

Chaupái.

Kausalyá took courage and cried : " My son, you have your father's and your guru's commands, which you must respect and affectionately carry out. Cease to lament, knowing it to be the will of Fate that Ráma is in banishment, the king in heaven, and you in such perplexity. You, my son," continued his mother, " are the sole refuge of your family, your people, and the ministers of state. Seeing God against us and the fates untoward, summon up resolution. I, your mother, adjure you, obediently comply with your guru's commands ; cherish your people, relieve the affliction of your family." The guru's speech and the ministers' approval had been as grateful to Bharat's hearing as sandal perfumes, but when he heard his mother's tender appeal fraught with the pathos of sincere affection—

Chhand 7.

when he heard his mother's pathetic appeal, Bharat was overcome ; his lotus eyes rained with tears that bedewed the fresh shoots of desolation in his soul. All who then beheld his condition entirely forgot about themselves—ah, Tulsi !—and reverently extolled him as the very perfection of true love.

Soraṭhá 6.

Clasping his lotus hands, Bharat, the champion of honour, stoutly made answer to them all in noble words that seemed as if dipped in nectar.

Chaupái.

"The guru has given me good advice, which has been approved by ministers, people, and all. My mother, too, has given me proper commands, and I must needs bow and obey. The injunctions of a guru, a father or mother, or master, or friend, should be cheerfully performed as soon as heard, and as all for the best; to deliberate whether they are right or wrong is a failure of duty and involves grievous sin. You have now given me honest advice, which it will be good for me to follow; yet, though I understand this clearly, my soul is still discontent. Hearken then to my prayer, and according to my circumstances so instruct me, forgiving my presumption in answering you: when a man is in distress good people do not reckon up his merits and demerits.

Dohá 170.

My father is in heaven, and Síta and Ráma in exile, and you tell me to be king; is it my gain or your own advantage that you expect to result from this?

Chaupái.

My gain is to serve Síta's lord, and of this I have been robbed by my mother's wickedness. After reflecting and searching my thoughts I find no other way of happiness than this. Of what account is a throne with all its cares, if I cannot see the feet of Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta? Without clothes a mass of jewels is of no use; of no use is asceticism without divine meditation; of no use is any enjoyment to a diseased body; prayer and penance go for nought without faith in Hari; without life, beauty of body is nought; and all is nought to me without Ráma. Permit me to join Ráma; this in one word is my only happiness. If again in making me king it is your own advantage that you desire, you speak under the influence of foolish affection.

Dohá 171.

In your infatuation you hope for happiness from the reign of such a wretch as I, Kaikeyi's son, of wicked nature, Ráma's enemy, and lost to shame.

Chaupái.

I speak the truth; hearken all and believe; in a king is required a righteous disposition. If you persist in giving the crown to me, earth will sink into hell. What guilty wretch is equal to me, for whom Síta and Ráma have been exiled? The king banished Ráma, but died in losing him. I, the miserable cause of all this wrong-doing, sit and listen to it all unmoved. I see the palace with no Ráma there, and yet live to endure the world's jeers. Holy Ráma eschews all pleasures of sense, and I, a greedy king, am hungering after enjoyment. In what words can I tell the hardness of my heart, which surpasses even adamant?

Dohá 172.

That every result is harder than its cause is no fault of mine: the thunderbolt is harder than bone,[1] and iron more stiff and unbending than the rock from which it is quarried.

Chaupái.

If my worthless life can cling to a body born of Kaikeyi, it will have a surfeit of misery: if, bereaved of my beloved, life is still dear to me, I shall have much hereafter to see and hear. Kaikeyi has banished Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta, and for her own advantage has caused the death of the king; she has taken upon herself widowhood and disgrace, and has caused the people sorrow and affliction, has allotted me glory and honour and dominion, and has settled everybody's business. What good is this now to me? and yet you too cry out to make me a king. I have been born into the world from Kaikeyi's womb, and all this is only my due; God has fashioned all my destiny; but why should my people combine to give a helping hand?

[1]The thunderbolt is said to be made from the bones of the Rishi Dadhíchi, who devoted himself to death in order that the gods might be supplied with arms against the Kálakeya Asuras, by whom they were oppressed. When his bones had been fashioned into thunderbolts by Tvashtri (the Vedic Vulcan), Indra hurled them against his enemies and slew their leader, the cloud-demon Vritra.

Dohá 173.

Stricken as I am by fate, overcome by organic disease,[1] and then stung by a scorpion, you give me wine to drink; tell me, what kind of treatment is this?

Chaupái.

The wise Creator has ordained for me everything that befits a son of Kaikeyi. That I am also Dasarath's son and Ráma's younger brother is an honour which God has bestowed upon me to no purpose. You all tell me to allow myself to be crowned, for kingly power is desired by all men. How and whom shall I answer? You talk at random as the fancy takes you. Apart from myself and my unhappy mother, tell me who will say that I have acted rightly? excepting myself, who else is there in the whole animate or inanimate creation that does not love Síta and Ráma as their own life? That a universal calamity should be my great gain, this is my ill-fortune and no blame to any one. You are moved by anxiety, kindness, and affection, and anything you say is all for the best.

Dohá 174.

Ráma's mother is so utterly guileless and bears me such great affection that she speaks from natural amiability, after seeing my remorse.

Chaupái.

The guru, as all the world knows, is an ocean of wisdom, and the universe is like a plum in the palm of his hand. He too is making ready for my coronation: when God is against me, every one is against me. Except Ráma and Síta there is not any one in the whole world who will not say this was a scheme of mine, and I must listen and bear it patiently: wherever there is water, there at last will be mud. I am not afraid of the world calling me vile; I have no thought for heaven: the one great intolerable anguish of soul is this, that through me Síta and Ráma have been rendered unhappy. Well has Lakshman reaped his life's reward, who

[1] According to Hindu physicians all organic disorders of the human frame arise from derangements of the blood or one of the three humors of the body, *kapha*, phlegm, *váyu*, wind, or *pitta*, bile. The vitiated humor which is specified in the text is wind, *bát*.

left all and clave to Ráma; while my birth has been the cause of Ráma's banishment. Wretch that I am, why thus lament in vain?

Dohá 175.

I declare before you all my grievous distress, unless I see Ráma's feet, the fire in my soul cannot be quenched.

Chaupái.

No other remedy can be seen by me: without Raghubar what care I for life? This wish alone is stamped upon my soul; at day-break let me follow my lord. Although I am a guilty wretch, and all this trouble is on my account, still when he sees my suppliant mien he will in his great mercy forgive me all. Raghuráu is so meek and utterly guileless of disposition, such a home of mercy and tenderness, that he would never injure even an enemy; while I, bad as I am, am his son and his servant. Be pleased, sirs, then to give me your blessing and permit me to depart, knowing it to be for my good; so Ráma will come again to his kingdom, after hearing my prayers and considering my devotion.

Dohá 176.

Though born of a wicked mother, and myself evil and ever doing wrong, still I am confident of Raghubír that he will know me for his own, and not abandon me."

Chaupái.

Bharat's words pleased all, imbued as they were with the nectar of piety. The people suffering from the baneful poison of separation revived as if at the sound of a healing charm. The queen-mothers, the ministers, the guru, and all the men and women in the city were agitated by the vehemence of their affection and kept on telling Bharat's praises: 'His body is the personification of devotion to Ráma; ah, my lord Bharat, why not say thus, when Ráma is precious as your life? If any churl in his folly ascribe to you your mother's sin, the wretch, with all who are his from generation to generation, shall have their abode in hell for hundreds of ages. The jewel is not infected with the guilt and villainy of the serpent (in whose head it is found), but is an antidote to poison and subdues pain and poverty.

Dohá 177.

By all means let us follow Ráma to the woods; Bharat has given good advice; sinking as we all were in an ocean of despair, you have held out help to us.'

Chaupái.

There was as great joy in the hearts of all, as when the *chátak* and peacock hear the sound of thunder. To start to-morrow seemed an excellent resolution; Bharat was to every one dear as his own life. After reverencing the sage and bowing the head to Bharat, they all took leave and went to their several homes, praising as they went his affectionate disposition, whose life was a blessing to the whole world. Exclaiming to one another, 'What a glorious idea!' they all went to make their preparations. Whoever was left with orders to keep watch at home, felt it like his death-stroke, and one would cry "No one ought to be told to stay: who does not desire life's best reward?

Dohá 178.

Perish property, house, fortune, friends, parents, kinsmen, and all that does not help to bring one to Ráma."

Chaupái.

In every house carriages of all kinds were making ready, and the start to-morrow was a heart-felt joy. Bharat pondered on going home: "The city, with its horses, elephants, palaces and treasuries, and all its wealth is Ráma's. If I recklessly go and leave it, in the end it will not be good for me; to injure[1] one's own lord is a crowning sin. A good servant acts for his master's interests, however much others may abuse him." So thinking he called such faithful servants as would never dream of failing in their duty, and after declaring to them his intention and instructing them in their work, he told them off for the posts for which they were severally fit. When he had thus diligently posted the guards, he proceeded to visit Ráma's mother.

[1] *Dohái* here would seem to be not for *duhai*, 'lamentation,' but for *droha*, 'injury.'

Dohá 179.

Understanding the ways of love, he sympathized with a mother's anxiety and ordered to be got ready convenient palanquins and seated carriages.

Chaupái.

The men and women of the city like the *chakwá* and *chakwi* were anxious at heart for the dawn, when they might start. The whole night had been spent in watching, when Bharat summoned his wise counsellors and said to them "Take all materials for the coronation, and there in the forest, sirs, invest Ráma with the sovereignty: start at once." At his word they bowed and speedily made ready horses, carriages, and elephants. The king of sages (Vasishtha) first mounted his chariot and led the way with his spouse Arundhati and all the materials for sacrifice. A host of Bráhmans, renowned for their asceticism, followed in vehicles of different kinds, and next the citizens on their own conveyances all set forth for Chitra-kút. The elegance of the palanquins in which the different Ránís were seated is beyond description.

Dohá 180.

After making over the city to his faithful servants and ceremoniously starting the procession, Bharat himself with his brother started too, his thoughts fixed on Ráma and Síta.

Chaupái.

All the people were as eager for a sight of Ráma as when a herd of elephants makes a rush for a stream. Reflecting within themselves that Síta and Ráma were in exile, Bharat and his brother went on foot. The people were moved by their affection and themselves dismounted and left horses, elephants, and carriages. But Ráma's mother stopped her palanquin by his side and softly said: "My son, I entreat you to mount your chariot, or all your people will be sufferers; if you walk, they will all walk, and they are so wasted with sorrow that they are not fit for the journey." Obedient to her commands, he bowed his head to her feet, and with his brother mounted the chariot. They halted the

first day at the Tamasa,[1] and the second on the bank of the Gomati.[2]

Dohá 181.

Out of devotion to Ráma, some vowed to drink only water, some to eat nothing but fruit, others to make only one meal at night, and they forswore all luxuries of dress and food.

Chaupái.

After resting at the Sai[3] they started at dawn and drew near to the city of Sringavera.[4] When the Nishád heard the news he thought sadly to himself: "For what reason is Bharat going to the forest? he has some evil design at heart. If he had no wrong intention, why should he bring an army with him? He thinks to kill Ráma and his brother, and then to reign in ease and security. Bharat has not taken to heart the maxims of sound polity; there was disgrace already, and now there will be loss of life. If all the gods and demons were to combine to fight, they would never conquer Ráma in battle. What wonder that Bharat should act thus; fruits of ambrosia do not grow from a poison stock."

Dohá 182.

Having thus reflected, Guh cried to his kinsmen: "Be on the alert, up and sink the boat and close the ferry.

Chaupái.

Make ready and blockade the pass, equip yourselves with every instrument of death. Take up arms against Bharat, and never let him cross the Ganges alive. To die in battle and on the Ganges bank, in Ráma's cause to lay down this frail body, and for one so mean as I am to join battle with a king like Bharat, it is a great

[1]The Tamasa; 'the dark-coloured' (more commonly spelt Tons), is a branch of the Ghoghra (the Sanskrit Gharghara, 'the roaring'), which leaves that river about 10 miles above Ayodhya, and after passing the town of Azamgarh falls into the Sarju (Sarayu).

[2]The Gomati (the name meaning 'rich in cattle') rises in a lake near Pilibhít, and after a course of 482 miles, in which it passes the cities of Lakhnau, Sultánpur, and Jaunpur, falls into the Ganges.

[3]The Sai is a river in Audh, which rises about midway between the Gomati and the Ganges, and after a course of some 230 miles falls into the former, 10 miles below the city of Jaunpur.

[4]The site of the ancient Sringavera is marked by a village bearing the same name, under the modernized form Sangrúr, on the bank of the Ganges in the Allahabad district.

gain for me, even if I meet my death. If I war and fight on my lord's behalf, I reap brilliant renown throughout the fourteen spheres. If I lose my life for Raghunáth, I shall have both hands full of luscious sweets. Whoever is not numbered among the just, nor counted among Ráma's votaries, is all the time that he lives only a burden to earth, and an axe at the foot of the tree of his mother's youth."

Dohá 183.

The Nishád king thus fearlessly excited the ardour of his followers, and mindful of Ráma called in haste for quiver, bow, and coat of mail.

Chaupái.

"Hasten, brethren, to complete your equipment, and after hearing my command let no one hesitate." All cheerfully responded "'Tis well, my lord," and mutually encouraged each other's zeal. Bowing again and again before the Nishád, all the gallant warriors, eager for the fray, invoking the slipper of Ráma's lotus feet, girt themselves with quiver, slung on the bow, donned their coats of mail, put helmet on head, and furbished up axe and bludgeon and spear—some so expert in the use of shield and sword that they seemed when they sprung into the air as though they had left the earth for good. When each and all had completed their full arrangements they went and bowed before king Guh. Seeing his gallant warriors so fit and ready, he addressed them each by name with courteous phrase.

Dohá 184.

"Do not play me false, my brethren; this is a great day's work for me." At this they cried with vehemence, "Fear not, captain.

Chaupái.

By Ráma's favour and your might, my lord, we will leave the host without a single fighting-man or horse. While life lasts we will never draw back our foot, and will make the earth one heap of corpses and skulls." When the Nishád lord had inspected his gallant band he cried "Beat the drum for the onset." When he had

so said, some one sneezed on the left. The soothsayers exclaimed, "A prosperous issue to the battle!" One old man thought over the omen and said "Bharat must be met, but there will be no fighting. He is going to make entreaty to Ráma, the omen says thus; there will be no battle." On hearing this, Guh said: "The elder has spoken well; fools act in haste and repent. Unless we ascertain Bharat's temper and disposition, we may do ourselves harm by fighting without knowledge.

Dohá 185.

Close up, my men, and stop the pass, and all join to discover the mystery. When we know whether he is a friend, an enemy, or a neutral, we can then lay our plans accordingly.

Chaupái.

We shall soon test his devotion and honest intent; hatred and love are not to be concealed." So saying, he began to make ready a present, and sent for bulbs, roots and fruit, birds and beasts, with the finest of fish, large *páthíns*, which were brought by kahárs in baskets full. When everything was arranged they went out to meet him, and had the most auspicious omens of good fortune. As soon as he saw the great sage afar off, he declared his name and prostrated himself before him. Vasishtha; knowing him to be a friend of Ráma's, gave him his blessing, and told Bharat about him. He, on hearing that he was Ráma's friend, left his chariot and advanced on foot to meet him with exuberant affection. Guh declared his home and race and name, and making obeisance laid his forehead to the ground.

Dohá 186.

But Bharat seeing him about to prostrate himself, took him to his bosom with as much incontrollable affection as though he had met Lakshman.

Chaupái.

Bharat received him with the greatest affection, while people extolled the manner of his love. There was a jubilant cry of Glory, Glory, as the gods applauded and rained down flowers upon him. "Though this man is in every way vile, both by custom of the world and by scriptural prescription, so that contact with his

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shadow requires ablution, yet Ráma's brother embraced him in his arms and thrilled all over with delight at meeting him. One who says 'Ráma, Ráma' when he yawns, a multitude of sins will not rise up against him. Here is one whom Ráma had clasped to his bosom and thereby purified him and all his family. If water of the Karmnása falls into the Ganges, tell me who will refuse to reverence it? and it is known throughout the world that Válmíki was made equal to Brahma simply for repeating Ráma's name backwards.

Dohá 187.

Even a Chandál,[1] a Savara, a Khasiya, a stupid foreigner, an outcast, a Kol, or a Kirát, by repeating the name of Ráma becomes most holy and renowned throughout the world.

Chaupái.

It is no wonder, it has been so for ages; who is there whom Raghubír cannot exalt?" As the gods told the greatness of Ráma's name, the people of Avadh listened and were glad. Bharat affectionately greeted Ráma's friend and asked him of his health and welfare. At the sight of Bharat's affectionate disposition, the Nishád was at once utterly overpowered; so great was his confusion, his love and his delight, that he could only stand and stare at Bharat. Collecting himself, he again embraced his feet and with clasped hands made this loving speech: "When I beheld his blessed lotus feet I accounted myself blessed for ever. Now, my lord, by your high favour my prosperity is secured for thousands of generations.

Dohá 188.

Reflecting on my past deeds and my descent, and again considering the greatness of the lord, any man in the world who adores not the feet of Raghubír must be under supernatural delusion.

[1]The word translated 'Chandál' is in the original *Swa-pach*, literally 'a dog-cooker,' *i. e.*, either one who feeds on dog's flesh, or who cooks food for dogs, 'a dog-keeper.' A Savara is a wild mountaineer. The Khasiya is a native of Khasa, a hill tract in Northern India. The word for 'foreigner' is Jaman, *i. e.*, Yavan, which originally denoted specially a Greek, an Ionian, and then came to mean any foreign barbarian. Accustomed as our ears are to the division of mankind into Greeks and Barbarians, it is a little strange to find the Greek selected as the typical barbarian.

Chaupái.

False, cowardly, low-minded and low-born as I am, an utter outcast by the laws both of God and society ; since the time that Ráma took me for his own, I have become the glory of the world." After witnessing his devotion and hearing his graceful humility Lakshman's younger brother next embraced him. Then the Nishád introduced himself by name and respectfully saluted the royal dames, who received him even as they would Lakshman and gave him their blessing : " May you live happily for millions of years." The citizens too were as glad to see him as if he had been Lakshman and cried: " Here is one who has loved to some purpose ; whom Ráma's own brother has taken to his arms and embraced." When the Nishád heard them thus magnify his good fortune, he was glad at heart as he showed them the way.

Dohá 189.

At a signal all his attendants, having learnt their master's will, went on and made ready tents under the trees and rest-houses by the ponds, gardens, and groves.

Chaupái.

When Bharat beheld the city of Sringavera he was overcome by emotion and was unnerved in every limb. As he leant upon the Nishád it was as goodly a sight as though embodied Humility and Love had met together. In this manner Bharat with all his army went to see the earth-purifying stream of the Ganges. As he made his obeisance to the ford where Ráma had crossed, he was as entranced as though he had met Ráma himself. The citizens bowing low gazed upon the divine stream with rapture, and after bathing prayed with clasped hands : " May our love to Rámchandra's feet never grow less." Bharat exclaimed : " Thy sands, O Gangá, are the bestowers of all happiness, the very cow of plenty to thy votaries : with folded hands I beg this boon, unalterable devotion to Síta and Ráma."

Dohá 190.

When Bharat had thus bathed and knew that all his mothers had bathed too, he received the *guru's* permission and took them to their tents.

Chaupái.

Wherever the people had pitched their tents, Bharat took every care of them all. After paying homage to the *guru* and obtaining his permission, the two brothers went to Ráma's mother. Then Bharat, after kissing their feet, with many tender phrases did reverence to all the queens, and having left them to the dutiful care of his brother, went away with the Nishád. Hand-in-hand they went, his body fainting with excess of love, as he begged his companion to show him the spot, that the fierce longing of his eyes and soul might be a little assuaged, where Síta, Ráma, and Lakshman had spent the night. As he spoke, his eyes overflowed with tears, and the Nishád in great distress at his speech led him at once to the place

Dohá 191.

where Raghubar had rested under the sacred *sinsipá* tree. With great reverence and devotion Bharat prostrated himself.

Chaupái.

When he spied the delectable grassy couch, he again made obeisance and reverently paced round it. He put upon his eyes the dust of the foot-prints with an enthusiasm of devotion beyond all telling. And seeing two or three golden spangles, he placed them upon his head as relics of Síta. With streaming eyes and aching heart he thus in gentle tones addressed his companion: "They are dim and lustreless through Síta's absence, and all the people of Avadh are equally woe-begone. To whom can I compare her father Janak, who was conversant at once with all life's pleasures and all philosophy? Her father-in-law, the sun-like monarch of the solar race, was the envy of even the lord of heaven. Her husband is the beloved Raghunáth, by whose greatness alone it is that any one is great.

Dohá 192.

I gaze on the couch of Síta, that devoted wife, that jewel of good women, and my heart breaks not with agitation; surely it is harder than a thunderbolt.

Chaupái.

Lakshman so young and comely and made to be fondled: never was there such a brother, nor is there, nor will be; so beloved by the people, the darling of his father and mother, and dear as their own life to Ráma and Síta; the picture of delicacy, the daintiest of striplings, whose body has never been exposed to the hot wind, how can he bear the hardships of the forest? O my heart would shame for hardness a million thunderbolts! Ráma at his birth was the light of the world, an ocean of beauty, of virtue, and all good qualities. Ráma's amiability was the delight of his subjects, his household, his *guru*, his father and mother, and all. Even enemies would praise Ráma; his courtesy of speech and manner stole every heart. Not a million Sarasvatis, not a hundred million Sesh-nágs could reckon up all my lord's virtues.

Dohá 193.

The image of bliss, jewel of the family of Raghu, the storehouse of all auspicious delights, slept on the ground on this littered grass: how wonderful are the ways of Providence!

Chaupái.

Ráma had never even heard mention of pain, the king cherished him like the tree of life, and day and night all his mothers guarded him as the eyelids guard the eye, and as a serpent guards the jewel in its head. And now he is roaming on foot through the woods, with nothing to eat but wild roots and fruits. A curse on thee, Kaikeyi, root of all evil, thou hast undone my best beloved; cursed be my wretched self, that ocean of iniquity, on whose account all these calamities have come to pass. God created me to disgrace my family, and my wicked mother has made me the ruin of my lord." Hearing these words the Nishád affectionately implored him: "Why, my lord, make these vain laments? Ráma is dear to you, and you are dear to Ráma; even she is blameless; the blame rests with adverse fate.

Chhand 8.

The ways of adverse fate are cruel; it has made your mother mad. That very night Ráma again and again broke out into

respectful praise of you. There is no one so dearly beloved by Ráma as you. I declare this on oath; be assured that all will be well in the end, and take comfort to your soul.

Sorathá 7.

Ráma is omniscient, full of meekness, tenderness, and compassion; of this make firm assurance in your heart; and come, take rest."

Chaupái.

Hearing his companion's speech he took comfort, and with his thoughts directed to Raghubír went to his tent. When the citizens were informed, heavy with woe they too came to see. Having reverently paced around they made obeisance and cursed Kaikeyi to their heart's content. Their eyes streamed with tears as they reproached the cruelty of fate. One would praise Bharat for his devotion, another would say the king had shown the greatest love; they reproached themselves and praised the Nishád: who can describe their agitation and distress? In this manner they all kept watch throughout the night and at daybreak began the passage. First the *guru* was put on a fine handsome boat, and then all the queens on another boat newly built. In an hour and a half all had crossed over: as they came to land Bharat took count of them all.

Dohá 194.

After performing his morning rites and reverencing his mother's feet and bowing the head to the *guru*, he sent the Nisháds on ahead and started the host.

Chaupái.

He made the Nishád king lead the van and started all the queens in their palanquins. He charged his younger brother with their escort, and made the *guru* go with the Brahmans. He himself bowed reverently to the Ganges, and invoking Ráma, Sita, and Lakshman, set forth on foot, while his horse was led by the bridle. Again and again his faithful servants cried: "Be pleased, my lord, to mount your horse." "Ráma," he answered, "has gone on foot, and are chariots, elephants, and horses made for me? It would be right for me to walk on my head; a servant's work is always the

hardest." When they saw his behaviour and heard his tender speech, all his servants melted away for pity.

Dohá 195.

At the third watch of the day Bharat entered Prayág, crying 'O Ráma, Síta; Ráma, Síta!' with irrepressible affection.

Chaupái.

The blisters on his feet glistened like drops of dew on a lotus bud. The whole company were distressed when they heard that Bharat had made the day's march on foot. After ascertaining that all the people had bathed, he went and did homage to the threefold stream. All who had dipped in the parti-coloured flood gave alms and did honour to the Brahmans. As Bharat gazed on the commingling of the dark and white waves, his body throbbed with emotion and he clasped his hands in prayer: "O queen of all holy places, bounteous of every blessing, whose power is declared in the Vedas and renowned throughout the world, I abandon my proper calling and make myself a beggar: is there anything so vile that a man in distress will not do it? As I know you to be all-wise and beneficent, accomplish the prayer of thy suppliant.

Dohá 196.

I crave not wealth, nor religious merit, nor voluptuous delights, nor deliverance from transmigration; but only that in every new birth I may persevere in love to Ráma; this is the boon I beg, and nought else.

Chaupái.

Ráma knows my wickedness; the people call me the ruin of my lord and master; through your favour may my devotion to the feet of Síta and Ráma increase more and more every day. Though the cloud forgets her all her life, and while she begs for rain, casts down upon her thunder and hail, yet if the *chátak* cease her importunity, she is despised, and if she persevere in her affection, is much honoured; or, as the quality of gold is refined by the fire, so may my vow to the feet of my beloved endure through all tribulation." In answer to Bharat's speech there came a soft and auspicious voice from the midst of the Tribeni: "Son Bharat, you are

altogether upright ; your love to Ráma's feet is unfathomable ; you distress yourself without cause ; there is no one so dear to Ráma as you are."

Dohá 197.

As he heard the river's gracious speech Bharat's body quivered with heartfelt gladness ; the heaven resounded with shouts of applause, and the gods rained down flowers.

Chaupái.

The inhabitants of Prayág, aged anchorites and boy students, householders and celibates, were all enraptured and said to one another as they met in groups : " Bharat's affection and amiability are thoroughly genuine." Still hearing of Ráma's many charming qualities, Bharat approached the great saint Bharadwáj. When the saint saw him prostrate himself upon the ground, he looked upon him as his own good angel incarnate, and ran and raised him up and took him to his arms and gave him the blessing he desired, and made him sit down. He bowed his head and sat, shrinking into the inmost recesses of shamefacedness ; greatly distrest lest the saint should ask any question. Seeing his confusion the saint said : " Hearken, Bharat ; I have heard everything ; God's doings are beyond our power.

Dohá 198.

Be not distrest at heart by the thought of what your mother has done. Son, it is no fault of Kaikeyi's ; it was Sarasvati who stole away her senses.

Chaupái.

If you say thus, 'no one will excuse me ;' I reply, Scripture and the practice of the world are both accepted as authorities by the wise ; and your glory, my son, will be sung unsullied, while the Veda and custom will both be honoured, for every one admits that this is according both to custom and the Veda that he take the throne to whom his father gives it. The truthful king summoned you to confer upon you the honour of sovereignty and its higher duties. Ráma's banishment is a monstrous wrong, which the whole world is grieved to hear of ; but the queen was demented by the

power of Fate, and in the end she has repented of the evil she has done. You are not the least in fault; whoever says you are, is a vile and ignorant wretch. Had you reigned, it would have been no sin, and Ráma would have been pleased to hear of it.

Dohá 199.

But now, Bharat, you have done still better; your present purpose is excellent; devotion to the feet of Raghubar is the root of every blessing in the world.

Chaupái.

This is your wealth and the very breath of your life; is there any one with good fortune equal to yours? Nor, my son, is it strange that you should act thus; you are a son of Dasarath's and Ráma's own brother. Hearken, Bharat; in Raghupati's heart there is no one upon whom so much love is lavished as upon you. Lakshman, Ráma, and Sita are all most fond of you; they spent the whole night in your praises. I learnt their secret when they came here to Prayág to bathe; they were overwhelmed with love for you. Raghubar has as great affection for you as a fool has for a life of pleasure. And this is no great credit to Raghurai, who cherishes all his suppliants and their kin; while you, Bharat, as it seems to me, are the very incarnation of love to him.

Dohá 200.

That which seems a reproach[1] to you, Bharat, is a lesson to all of us; it is an event which inaugurates a new flood of passionate devotion.

Chaupái.

Your glory, my son, is a newly created and spotless moon; its lotuses and partridges are Ráma's servants; it is ever rising and never sets, nor wanes in the world its heaven, but increases day by day; the three spheres, like the *chakwás*, are exceedingly enamoured of it, and the sun of Ráma's majesty never robs it of splendour, but by day as well as night it is ever bountiful to all, and Kaikeyi's evil deeds cannot eclipse it. Full of the nectar of devotion to Ráma, and unsullied by any stain for wrong done to

[1]Your disobedience to the wishes of your mother and the commands of your *guru* in refusing to accept the throne.

the *guru*,[1] you are saturated with the nectar of faith, and have brought this nectar within the reach of the whole world. King Bhagiratha brought down the Ganges,[2] whose invocation is a mine of all prosperity ; but Dasarath's virtues are past all telling; why say more? He has no equal in the world.

Dohá 201.

Through his devotion and humility Ráma was made manifest, whom the eyes of Siva's heart are never wearied with beholding.

Chaupái.

You have created an incomparable moon of glory, in which for the figure of the hare is stamped love to Ráma. Cease, my son, from lamentation; you have found the philosopher's stone and yet fear poverty! Hearken, Bharat; I tell no falsehood; a hermit and ascetic dwelling in the forest, I obtained a glorious reward for all my good deeds when I beheld Ráma, Síta, and Lakshman; the fruit of that fruit is the sight of you: Prayág and I are both highly favoured. Bharat, I congratulate you; you have achieved universal renown." So saying the saint was overwhelmed with emotion. As they hearkened to his words, the whole assembly rejoiced; the gods applauded his goodness and rained down flowers. Shouts of Glory, Glory resounded in heaven and in Prayág ; Bharat was lost in rapture at the sound.

[1]There is a popular legend that Vrihaspati, the *guru* of the gods, on one occasion when he returned from his bath in the Ganges, found his wife in the embraces of the Moon-god. He was not able to seize the adulterer, but threw his dripping bathing robe at him and hit him in the face, thus causing the spots that are still to be seen there. Throughout this stanza Bharat's glory is compared to a newly created moon, which is in every respect superior to the ordinary moon which we see in the heavens. The one sets and wanes, the other is always on the increase ; the one mainly delights only lotuses and partridges, the other is the joy of Ráma's faithful servants ; the one shines only by night, the other by day as well ; the one yields nectar, it is true, but none can get at it; the other is impregnated with the nectar of faith, which is brought within the reach of all ; the one is branded with the marks of Vrihaspati's indignation, the other is spotless, though Bharat too offended his *guru* by refusing to reign at his command; the one is stamped only with the figure of a hare (the man in the moon of European nurseries), the other is inscribed with love to Ráma.

[2]Bhagiratha, the son of king Dilípa, after a thousand years spent in austerities, brought down the Ganges from heaven to earth, and with its vivifying flood watered and restored to life the ashes of the sixty thousand sons of his great-grandfather Sagara, who had been destroyed by the Rishi Kapila. This was a great achievement, but Dasarath's was a greater, by whom Ráma was begotten into the world.

Dohá 202.

With quivering body, with his heart full of Ráma and Síta, and his lotus eyes flowing with tears, he bowed to the saintly assembly and thus spoke in faltering accents:

Chaupái.

"In a conclave of saints and in this so holy a place, truth must needs be spoken; any oath is superfluous and vain; if in such a spot I were to say anything false, no sin or vileness would equal mine. You are all-wise, and therefore I speak honestly; Ráma, too, knows the secrets of the heart. I am not grieved for what my mother has done, nor pained at heart lest the world deem me caitiff: I have no dread of the loss of heaven, no sorrow for my father's death, whose good deeds and renown are glorious all the world over, who had such sons as Lakshman and Ráma, and who, as soon as he lost Ráma, dropt his fragile body; why make long mourning for the king? But Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta, without shoes to their feet, in hermit's dress, are wandering from wood to wood;

Dohá 203.

clad in deer-skins, feeding on wild fruits, sleeping on the ground on a litter of grass and leaves, living under trees, ever exposed to the inclemency of cold and heat and rain and wind.

Chaupái.

This is the burning pain that is ever consuming my breast, so that I cannot eat by day, nor sleep by night. For this sore disease there is no remedy; I have searched in mind the whole world over. My mother's evil counsel, the root of all calamity, like a carpenter fashioned an axe out of my advantage, made a handle of the ill wood of Resentment, and fixed the term of banishment as it were a horrible spell. To me she applied this infamous contrivance and has hurled me down in widespreading ruin. These disasters will cease when Ráma returns to live in Avadh; there is no other remedy." When the saints heard Bharat's speech, they were glad and all gave him high praise: "Son, grieve not so sorely; at the sight of Ráma's feet all sorrow will pass away."

Dohá 204.

The great saints comforted him and said, "Be our welcome guest; accept such herbs and roots and fruits as we can offer, and be content."

Chaupái.

On hearing the saints' words Bharat was troubled at heart; the time was not one for feasting, and yet he was very loth to decline. At last, reflecting that a *guru's* command is imperative, he kissed his feet and replied with clasped hands: "I must needs bow to your behest, for this, my lord, is my highest duty." The great saint was pleased at Bharat's words and called up all his trusty servants: "An entertainment must be provided for Bharat: go and gather herbs, roots, and fruits." They bowed the head and said 'Certainly, my lord,' and gladly set about each his own work. But the saint thought to himself: "I have invited a distinguished guest, who should be treated like a god." At his command Animá and the other good Fairies came: "What are your orders, master, and we obey."

Dohá 205.

"Bharat and his brother and all their host are distrest by the loss of Ráma; show them hospitality and ease them of their toil;" thus cheerily spoke the great saint.

Chaupái.

The Fairies bowed to his commands and thought themselves most highly favoured, saying one to another: "Ráma's brother is indeed a guest beyond compare." Then kissing the saint's feet, "To-day we will do such things that the whole of the king's party shall be pleased." So saying, a number of such charming pavilions were erected, that the equipages of the gods were put out of countenance at the sight of them. They were furnished with so much luxury and magnificence that the immortals beheld them longingly. Men-servants and maid-servants with every appliance were in attendance, and gave their whole mind to their work. In an instant of time the Fairies completed all their arrangements, though no dream of heaven was ever so beautiful. First the people were

assigned their quarters, all bright and pleasant and in accordance with their tastes.

Dohá 206.

Then, as the saint had ordered, Bharat and his family had theirs assigned them, which astonished even the Creator by their magnificence; so great the power of the holy ascetic's penance.

Chaupái.

When Bharat beheld the saint's power, the realms of all the rulers of the spheres seemed to him as trifles. The luxuries that had been prepared cannot be described; any philosopher would forget his self-restraint on seeing them. Thrones, couches, drapery and canopies; groves and gardens; birds and beasts; sweet-scented flowers, fruits like nectar, and many a lake of limpid water; with luscious food and drinks of innumerable kinds, so that the people were quite put out of countenance by what they saw, as though they had been ascetics. Each one had as it were his own cow of plenty and tree of paradise; Indra and Sachi grew covetous at the sight. The season, spring; the air soft, cool, and fragrant; all the great objects of life ready at hand; garlands, perfumes, dancing girls, and delights of every kind to charm and astonish the spectator.

Dohá 207.

Affluence, like the *chakwi*,[1] and Bharat as her mate, by compulsion of the saint's order were prisoned together that night, as by a fowler, in the cage of the hermitage, till dawn broke.

Chaupái.

Then he bathed at the holy place and with his host bowed the head to the sage. Having submissively received his commands and blessing, he prostrated himself and made much supplication. Then taking guides well acquainted with the road, he set out

[1]According to Hindu belief the *chakwa* and his female mate the *chakwi* are doomed for ever to nocturnal separation. Even though they may be caught and imprisoned together in one cage, they cannot enjoy each other's society till the break of day. In the same way Bharat, though detained for the night by the saint's order at the hermitage in the midst of luxury, could not enjoy it by reason of his vow. Válmiki represents him as less abstemious, and, in describing the banquet, makes mention of wine and flesh meat of various kinds, venison, wild boar, peafowl and partridges, all of which Tulsi Dás has omitted in concession to modern prejudices.

resolutely for Chitra-kút; supported on the arm of Ráma's friend, he seemed, as he went, the very incarnation of Love. With no shoes and no shelter for his head, in the fulfilment of his loving vow and his unfeigned integrity, he asked his companion for a history of the wanderings of Ráma, Síta, and Lakshman, and he gently narrated it. When he saw the tree where Ráma had rested, his heart could not contain its emotion. At the sight of his condition, the gods rained down flowers, and the path that he trod grew smooth and pleasant.

Dohá 208.

"The clouds afford him shade and the air breathes soft and refreshingly; Ráma's road was not thus, as it is now for Bharat.

Chaupái.

All created things, whether living or lifeless, that saw the lord, or were seen by him, were rendered fit for salvation, and the sight of Bharat has now healed them of the curse of transmigration. This is no great thing for Bharat, whom Ráma is mindful to remember. A single mention of the name of Ráma on earth makes a man safe and a saviour of others. But Bharat is Ráma's beloved and own brother; why should he not bring a blessing on the road he treads?" As saints, sages, and hermits thus reasoned and gazed upon Bharat, they rejoiced at heart. Indra was troubled by the sight of his power: "In the world things turn out well for the good and badly for the bad." Then turning to his *guru* (Vrihaspati), "Something must be done, sir, to prevent the meeting between Ráma and Bharat.

Dohá 209.

Ráma is so modest and sympathetic, and Bharat such an ocean of affection; our scheme threatens to be spoilt; we must bestir ourselves and devise some new stratagem."

Chaupái.

Hearing this speech, the teacher of the gods smiled, to find the thousand-eyed so blind, and said: "Leave tricks alone; it will be all trouble in vain; any deception here would be absurd. O king of heaven, any delusion practised on a servant of the lord of

delusion must recoil on the contriver. I interfered once, knowing it was Ráma's wish, but any under-hand work now would only do harm. Listen, O king; it is Ráma's nature never to be angry at any sin against himself, but whoever sins against one of his servants is consumed in the fire of his wrath. Popular tradition and the Vedas abound in such legends; Durvásas[1] knows well this great trait in his character. And is there any one so faithful to Ráma as Bharat, who is ever repeating Ráma's name and Ráma his?

Dohá 210.

Think not, lord of the immortals, to injure any servant of Raghubar's, unless you would suffer the pain of disgrace in this world, sorrow in the next, and a daily increasing burden of regret.

Chaupái.

Hearken to my advice, king of the gods: Ráma has the greatest love for his servants; he is pleased at any service done to a servant, while enmity to a servant is the height of enmity to himself. Although he is ever the same, without either passion or anger, and contracts neither sin nor merit, virtue nor defect; and though he has made fate the sovereign of the universe, and every one has to taste the fruit of his own actions, still he plays at variations according as hearts are faithful or unfaithful. Though without attributes or form, illimitable and impassible, Ráma has yielded to the love of his followers and taken a material form. He has always regarded the wishes of his servants, as the Vedas and Puránas and gods and saints bear witness. Knowing this, refrain from naughtiness and show Bharat fitting devotion.

Dohá 211.

Any worshipper of Ráma is zealous for the good of others, sorrows with the sorrowful, and is full of compassion; then fear not Bharat, O king, who is the crown of worshippers.

[1]King Ambaríśha was a devout worshipper of Vishnu (with whom Ráma is here identified) and thereby excited the jealousy of the irascible sage Durvásas, the most intolerant of all the adherents of Siva. On some trivial pretext he cursed the king, who at once fell senseless to the ground, but Vishnu was ready at hand to succour his faithful follower and sent his fiery discus upon Durvásas, which chased him all over the world and up into heaven, where the gods said nothing could be done for him till he went back and humbly begged pardon of Ambaríśha.

Chaupái.

The lord is an ocean of truth and a well-wisher of the gods, and Bharat obeys his orders. You are troubled by your own selfishness; there is no fault in Bharat; it is a delusion on your part."[1] When the great god heard the words of the heavenly preceptor he got understanding and his anxiety passed away. In his joy he rained down flowers and began to extol Bharat's good qualities. In this manner Bharat went on his way, while saints and sages looked and praised. Whenever he sighed Ráma's name, it seemed like the bubbling over of love. Thunderbolts and stones melted at his words; as for the people, their emotion is beyond description. Encamping half-way, he came to the Jamuná, and as he gazed on its water his eyes filled with tears.

Dohá 212.

As he and his retinue gazed on the lovely stream, the colour of Ráma's body, he was plunged into a sea of desolation, till he climbed the boat of discretion.

Chaupái.

That day he halted on the bank of the Jamuná, giving every one time for what they had to do. In the night boats came from all the ghâts in greater number than could be counted. At daybreak all crossed in a single trip. Ráma was gratified by his companion's good service. After bathing and bowing to the river, he set forth with the Nishád king and Satrughna. First of all in his glorious car went the great saint, followed by all the royal host; after them the two brothers on foot; their dress, apparel, and ornaments, all of the very simplest. With them their servants and friends and the minister's son, invoking Lakshman, Sita, and Ráma. Any spot wherever Ráma had encamped or rested they lovingly saluted.

Dohá 213.

At the news, the dwellers by the road-side left their household work and ran after them; seeing his form, they were overcome with love and joy and had their life's reward.

[1] In the Sanskrit poem there is nothing that corresponds to this colloquy between Indra and Vishaspati. It is introduced by Tulsi Dás as a peg on which to hang a theological exposition.

Chaupái.

Lovingly one said to another: "Friend, are they Ráma and Lakshman, or not? In age, figure, complexion, and beauty they are the same, dear girl, and resemble them in an equally affectionate disposition. But their dress is not the same, friend, nor is Síta with them, and before them marches a vast host of horse and foot, elephants and chariots. Nor are they glad of countenance, but have some sorrow at heart; from this difference, friend, a doubt arises." The women were persuaded by her arguments and cried: "There is no one so clever as you." After praising her and admiring the truth of her remarks, another woman spoke in winning tones, and lovingly related the whole history, how Ráma had lost the delights of empire; and again set to praising Bharat for his affectionate disposition and happy nature.

Dohá 214.

"He travels on foot, feeding only on wild fruits, and abandoning the crown given him by his father, is going to Ráma to persuade him to return; is there any one at the present day like Bharat?

Chaupái.

To tell and hear of Bharat's brotherly devotion and his course of action dispels all sin and sorrow. Anything that I can say, friend, is all too little; he is Ráma's brother; how could he be different from what he is? All of us who have seen him and Satrughna have truly become blessed among women." Hearing his virtues and seeing his forlorn state they lamented: "He is not a fit son for such a mother as Kaikeyi." One said: "It is no blame to the queen that god has been so kind to us. What are we, outcasts from the world and the Veda, women of low birth and mean livelihood, whose home is a wretched hovel in some poor village of this miserable country, that we should have such a vision, a sufficient reward for the highest religious merit?" There was the same delight and wonder in every town, as though the tree of paradise had sprung up in the desert.

Dohá 215.

At the sight of Bharat, the good fortune of the people by the wayside manifested itself in like manner, as though by the will of providence Prayág had been made accessible to the people of Lanká.

Chaupái.

Hearing these praises of his own and Ráma's many virtues, he went on his way, ever mindful of Raghunáth. Whenever he spied any holy place, or hermitage, or temple, he bathed and reverently saluted it, praying in his heart of hearts for this one boon, perseverance in devotion to the feet of Síta and Ráma. If there met him a Kirát or Kol, or other dweller in the woods, anchorite or student, hermit or ascetic, whoever he might be, he saluted him and asked in what part of the forest were Lakshman, Ráma, and the Videhan princess. They told him all the news of the lord, and at the sight of Bharat reaped their life's reward. If any person said 'We have seen them well,' they were counted as dear as Ráma and Lakshman themselves. In this manner asking courteously of every one, he heard the whole story of Ráma's forest life.

Dohá 216.

Halting that day, Bharat started again at dawn, invoking Raghunáth: all who were with him being equally desirous with himself for a sight of Ráma.

Chaupái.

Every one had auspicious omens; lucky throbbings in the eyes and arms; Bharat and the host rejoiced "Ráma will be found and our sore distress will be at an end." Each indulged his own fancy, and as they marched all seemed intoxicated with the wine of love, their limbs relaxed, their feet unsteady on the ground, and the accents of their voice inarticulate from excess of emotion. Then was the time that Ráma's guide pointed out the monarch of mountains in all its beauty, near which on the river's bank the two heroes and Síta were dwelling. All at the sight fell to the ground with cries of 'Glory to Ráma, the life of Jánaki!' The royal host was as overwhelmed with emotion as though Ráma had come back to Avadh.

Dohá 217.

Bharat's love at that time was such that not Seshnág could describe it; it is as far beyond the poet as the bliss of heaven is beyond a man stained by selfishness and sensuality.

Chaupái.

Being all unmanned by their love for Raghubar, they had gone but two *kos* by the close of day, then scanning land and water they halted. When the night was past, the beloved of Raghunáth sallied forth again. On the other hand Ráma, while it was yet dark, awoke, and Síta told him what she had seen in a dream: "Methought Bharat had come with an army, being tortured in body by the fever of separation from his lord; all were sad, wretched, and downcast, and the queen's consort were greatly altered." On hearing Síta's dream, the healer of sorrows grew sorrowful, and his eyes filled with tears: "This dream, Lakshman, bodes no good: we shall hear of something that we by no means wished." So saying, he and his brother bathed, worshipped Purári, and propitiated the saints.

Chhand 9.

After propitiating the gods and reverencing the saints, the lord went and sat down with his gaze to the north. The dust in the air and the many birds and deer taking to flight disquieted him and he returned to the hermitage. He stood up and looked, anxious in mind as to the cause. Then came some Kiráts and Kols and told him all the news.

Soratha 8.

When he heard the glad tidings his heart was full of joy, and his body quivered all over; while his eyes, like the autumnal lotus, were filled with the moisture of affection.

Chaupái.

Again Síta's lord became anxious: 'What can be the cause of Bharat's coming?' Then came one and said: 'There is with him no small army in full equipment.' Hearing this, Ráma was greatly disturbed; on the one hand was his father's injunction, on the other his regard for his brother. Thinking to himself over Bharat's

disposition, the lord's mind found no sure standing-point; but at last he calmed himself with the reflection: 'Bharat is said to be good and sensible.' Lakshman saw that his lord was troubled at heart, and spoke out as he thought the occasion demanded: "I speak, sire, before I am asked; but sometimes impertinence in a servant is not impertinent. You, master, are the crown of the wise; I a mere retainer, but I say what I think.

Dohá 218.

You, my lord, are kind and easy, a storehouse of amiability; you love and trust every one, and think them all like yourself.

Chaupái.

A worldly man, who has got power, becomes mad and infatuated and so betrays himself. Bharat was well-taught, good, and clever, and, as every one knew, was devoted to his lord's feet; but now that he has become king, he breaks down in his course all the bounds of duty. A wicked and ill-disposed brother having spied out his time, and knowing that Ráma is alone in the forest, he has taken evil counsel and equipt an army, and has come to make his sovereignty secure. After plotting all sorts of wicked schemes the two brothers have assembled their army and come. If he had no treacherous malpractice at heart, why should he affect chariots and horses and elephants? But why reproach Bharat? all the world goes mad on getting dominion.

Dohá 219.

The Moon-god debauched his *guru's* wife; Nahusha mounted a palanquin borne by Brahmans; and who fell so low as Vena, the enemy of established usage and the Veda?

Chaupái.

Sahasra-báhu, Indra, Trisanku; all were brought to disgrace by the intoxication of kingly power.[1] Bharat has planned this clever scheme, so as not to leave himself a single enemy in the field; but in one point he has made a mistake, in despising Ráma

[1]The pride of kings and its ruinous results are here illustrated by reference to six famous mythological personages. The first is the great Moon-god, who in the wantonness of power robbed his own spiritual instructor Vrihaspati of his bride Tára, and had by her a son named Budha, the regent of the planet Mercury. Of this legend mention has already been made in a note after *dohá* 201. For

as if he had no friends ; he will discover this to-day with a vengeance, when he sees Ráma's indignant face in the battle." So saying, he forgot all prudence, and his whole body, so to speak, bristled with pugnacity. Falling at his lord's feet and putting the dust of them upon his head, he cried in tones of natural and honest vehemence : " My lord, think it not wrong of me ; Bharat has tried me not a little; how long shall I endure to remain quiet, my lord being with me and my bow in my hand ?

punishment, he bears for ever in his face the marks of the brand set upon him by the injured husband.

NAHUSHA was the grandson of Purú-ravas, the founder of the lunar race of kings, who reigned at Pratishthana on the Ganges opposite Prayág. When Indra had temporarily abdicated his throne in heaven, Nahusha was selected to fill it. But not satisfied with this dignity, he demanded also Indra's queen. She agreed to receive him, if he came to her in a pálki borne by Brahmins. At his request the seven great Rishis agreed to do him this service. But he was so inflamed with arrogance and lust that they could not walk fast enough for him, and at last, disgusted with his violence and abuse, they threw down the pálki and cursed him and he was turned into a serpent.

VENA, the son of Anga, as soon as he had been proclaimed monarch of the whole world, forbade any gifts to be given to Brahmans, or sacrifice offered to the gods, for that he was sole lord of all, and that none else was entitled to worship. The holy sages implored him to desist from such impiety ; but he would not listen to them. They then struck him with the light blades of grass that had been consecrated by their prayers, and he immediately fell dead.

KÁRTAVÍRYA was a mighty conqueror, who, among other boons granted him by the sage Dattatreya, obtained also this one, that he should have a thousand arms ; whence he is here called Sahasra-báhu. One day, when out hunting in the woods, he was hospitably entertained by Jamadagni in his hermitage. But instead of making any proper return for this kindness, he carried off his host's sacrificial cow. Jamadagni's son, Parasurám, was away at the time, but when he returned, and heard of what had been done, he followed after Kártavirya and cut off his thousand arms and slew him. The king's sons, to avenge their father's death, attacked Jamadagni in his hermitage ; and in consequence of this, Parasurám made his famous vow to extirpate the whole Kshatriya race.

INDRA, the king of heaven, became enamoured of Ahalyá, the wife of the sage Gautama, and visited her disguised as her husband. The sage saw him as he left her room and cursed him with perpetual loss of virility. Ahalyá was changed into a stone till Ráma should come and deliver her. See Vol. I., pp. 19, 120.

TRISANKU was a king of Ayodhyá, who in his pride aspired to celebrate a great sacrifice and by its merit ascend to heaven in person. He first requested Vasishtha to conduct the ceremony ; but the saint saw through his motives and refused him. He then applied to Vasishtha's sons, but they, thinking that he only wished to bring about a quarrel between them and their father, cursed him, so that he became a Chandál. While in this low state he killed Vasishtha's cow ; and for these three sins, pride, mischief-making, and cow-killing, three great horns grew out of his forehead. He then put himself under the protection of Visvamitra, who engaged to perform the sacrifice and invited all the gods to it. They, however, declined to come ; whereupon Visvamitra created new gods, completed the sacrifice, and translated Trisanku to the skies. But no sooner had he arrived there than the gods hurled him down again ; and falling headlong he was suspended midway, where he is still to be seen, as the constellation in the southern hemisphere, called Trisanku. The saliva that dropped from his mouth forms the river Karmnásá, which flows between Banáras and Bihar, and which it is considered a pollution to touch.

Dohá 220.

Am I not of warrior descent, a scion of the house of Raghu, and known throughout the world as Ráma's brother? What is so low as the dust? Yet if stirred by a kick it rises and falls upon your head."[1]

Chaupái.

As he stood with clasped hands and sought permission, he seemed like heroism itself aroused from slumber, binding up his hair in a knot, girding on his quiver by his side, trimming his bow, and taking arrows in hand. "To-day I shall distinguish myself as Ráma's servant and will give Bharat a lesson in fighting. Reaping the fruit of their contempt for Ráma, both brothers shall sleep on the couch of battle. It is well done that the whole host has come; to-day I shall manifest my wrath and have done with it. As a lion tears in pieces a herd of elephants, or as a hawk clutches and carries off a quail, so will I lightly overthrow upon the field Bharat and his brother and all their host. If Siva himself should come to their aid, in Ráma's name I would worst him in battle."

Dohá 221.

Lakshman spoke so furiously that the regents of the spheres, beholding and hearing his solemn oath, looked on in terror and longed to flee away.

Chaupái.

The world was entranced; a voice was heard in the air, declaring the mighty power of Lakshman's arm: "Son, who can tell, or who can understand your might and majesty? but any business, whether right or wrong, should be done deliberately; so every one agrees. They who act rashly and afterwards repent, the Vedas say are anything but wise." On hearing this voice from heaven Lakshman was abashed, and both Ráma and Sita addressed him courteously: "What you have said, brother, is sound wisdom; the intoxication of power is the worst of all; the merest taste of it maddens any king who has not been trained in the

[1]The general meaning of the passage would seem to be: Bharat has given such provocation that the meanest creature in the world would resent it; much more should I, who am a warrior by birth.

school of philosophy. But hearken, Lakshman; in the whole of God's creation I have never seen nor heard of any one so good as Bharat.

Dohá 222.

He would never be intoxicated with power, even though he sat upon the throne of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva. What! can a few drops of *kánji* curdle the milky ocean?

Chaupái.

The sun may grow dim at midday; yea, sooner may the pure ether be absorbed in cloud; sooner may Agastya[1] be drowned in the puddle of a cow's footprint, or earth forget to be long-suffering; sooner may the buzz of a mosquito puff away Mount Meru, than kingly pride, my brother, touch Bharat and Lakshman. I swear by you and by our father, there is no so true a brother as Bharat. The Creator has fashioned the world by mixing the milk of goodness with the water of evil; Bharat is the swan in the lake of the solar race, who from the day of his birth has known to distinguish between the good and the evil; choosing the milk of goodness and discarding the water of evil, he has illumined the whole world with his glory." As Raghurái thus recited Bharat's virtues and amiable disposition, he became drowned in a sea of love.

Dohá 223.

The gods, hearing his speech and seeing his affection for Bharat, all applauded Ráma, saying: "Who so compassionate as the Lord?

Chaupái.

If Bharat had not been born into the world, who was there on earth to be the champion of all right? Bharat's good qualities are more than all the poets could describe; who save you, Raghunáth, could comprehend them?" When Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta heard these words of the gods they were more glad than can be told. Now Bharat and all his host bathed in the sacred Mandákini. Then leaving the people on the bank and having asked permission from his mother, his *guru*, and the minister, he set out to visit Síta and Raghurái with the Nishád king and his brother.

[1] Who swallowed up the ocean.

As he thought upon his mother's deeds he was abashed, and formed a thousand ill-conjectures in his mind : " What if Ráma, Lakshman, and Sita, on hearing my name, should leave the place and go elsewhere?

Dohá 224.

Taking me to be my mother's accomplice, nothing that he might do would be too much. If again he overlooks my sin and folly, and receives me kindly as his well-wisher;

Chaupái.

whether he spurns me as a black-hearted wretch, or welcomes me as his servant, my only refuge is at Ráma's feet ; he is the best of masters, the fault is all his servant's. The *chátak* and the fish are celebrated throughout the world for the thoroughness and constancy of their vows of love." With these thoughts in his mind he went on his way, his whole body rendered powerless by excessive love and trepidation ; his mother's sin, as it were, turning him back, while his strong faith, like some sturdy bull, dragged him forward. Whenever he thought of Ráma's good nature, his feet moved swiftly along the way; his course was like that of a water-fly carried along by the stream. Seeing Bharat's anxiety and affection, the Nishád was transported out of himself.

Dohá 225.

Auspicious omens began to occur, and the Nishád after hearing them and making a calculation said : " Sorrow will pass away, joy will succeed ; but in the end there will be distress again."

Chaupái.

Knowing his servant's words to be all true, he went on and drew near to the hermitage. When Bharat saw the vast woods and rocks, he was as glad as a hungry wretch on getting a good meal. Like people afflicted by every calamity,[1] worn out with troubles,[2] ill-fortune, and pestilence, who rejoice on escaping to a prosperous and well-governed country, so were Bharat's feelings.

[1]Public calamities, *iti*, are reckoned as seven in number, *viz.*, drought, floods, locusts, rats, parrots, tyranny, and invasion.

[2]Trouble (*táp*) is of three kinds, *viz.*, trouble of mind, visitation of God, and fear of men.

The forest where Ráma dwelt was as bright and happy as people are happy who have got a good king; with Asceticism for King Wisdom's Minister of State; with the beautiful and sacred groves for his realm; with continence and faithfulness for champions; and the rocks for his capital; with Peace and Good-will for his virtuous and lovely queens; a king perfect at all points; a suppliant at Ráma's feet, and therefore easy in mind,

Dohá 226.

Royal Wisdom, having conquered King Delusion with all his host, held undisputed sway in his capital; all was joy, happiness, and prosperity.

Chaupái.

The frequent hermits' cells about the woods were his cities, towns, villages, and hamlets; the many birds and beasts of all descriptions were his innumerable subjects. The hares, elephants, lions, tigers, boars, buffaloes, and wolves, a wonder to behold, forgetting their antipathies, grazed together, like a duly marshalled army complete in all its parts. The roar of the mountain torrents and the cries of mad elephants were like the din of kettledrums; the *chakwas, chakors, chátaks,* parrots, and cuckoos made a delightful concert; the swans were in their glory; the bees buzzed and the peacocks danced like the festive *entourage* of some Rája, while the creepers, trees, and grasses, with the flowers and fruits, formed his brilliant court.

Dohá 227.

Beholding the beauty of Ráma's hill, Bharat's heart was overpowered with love, like as an ascetic is overjoyed when he completes his vow and reaps the fruit of his penance.

Chaupái.

Then the pilot mounted a height and reaching out his hand cried to Bharat: "See, my lord, those huge trees, *pákar, jáman,* mango, and *tamála,*[1] in the midst of which is conspicuous a *bar* tree, so beautiful and grand that the soul is charmed at the sight, with

[1]The *pákar* is the Ficus venosa; the *jáman,* the Eugenia jambolana; the *tamála,* the Xanthochymus pictorius; the *bar,* or banyan, the Ficus Bengalensis.

dense dark shoots and red fruit, affording a pleasant shade in all seasons of the year, a mass of black and purple, as if God had brought together all that was lovely to make it. Under this tree, near the river, sir, where Ráma has roofed in his sylvan hut, are many graceful shrubs of Tulsi, planted, some by Síta's lord, and some by Lakshman, and in the shade of the *bar* tree Síta with her own lotus hands has reared a charming altar.

Dohá 228.

There the well instructed Síta and Ráma are ever wont to sit in the midst of the hermits, listening while sacred legends are read and all the Vedas, Shástras, and Puránas."

Chaupái.

As he listened to his friend's speech and gazed upon the tree, Bharat's eyes overflowed with tears. The two brothers advanced reverently; Sáradá would fail to do justice to their love. When they saw the prints of Ráma's feet they rejoiced like some beggar on finding the philosopher's stone, and applied the dust to their head, heart, and eyes with as much delight as if they had found Ráma himself. Seeing Bharat's utterly indescribable condition, birds, beasts, and all created things, whether animate or inanimate, were absorbed in devotion. The guide in his excitement lost the way, but the gods showed it to him and rained down flowers. Saints and sages gazed in rapture and burst but into praises of his sincere affection: 'Who in all the world is like Bharat, who makes fools wise and the wise fools?'

Dohá 229.

Raghubír, the ocean of compassion, after churning the depths of Bharat's soul with the Mount Meru of bereavement, brought out from it the nectar of love.

Chaupái.

The two fair brothers and their guide were not visible to Lakshman, by reason of the dense shade of the forest; but Bharat could see his lord's sacred hermitage, the charming home of everything delightful. As he entered it his burning grief was assuaged, as when an ascetic is rewarded with salvation. He saw before him

Lakshman affectionately conversing with his lord, his hair fastened in a knot, a hermit's robe girt about his loins, his quiver slung, arrows in his hand, and his bow on his shoulder. By the altar an assembly of saints and sages, among whom Síta and Ráma were conspicuous in hermit's attire, with matted hair and body darkened by exposure; like Rati and Kámdev in saint's disguise. He, who with one smiling glance can dispel every anguish of soul, had bow and arrows ready in his lotus hands.[1]

Dohá 230.

In the midst of the circle of saints Síta and Ráma shone forth as fair as Faith and the Supreme Spirit incarnate in the council chamber of Wisdom.

Chaupái.

He, his brother, and their guide were so absorbed that joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain were all forgotten. Crying 'Mercy, mercy, O lord and master!' he fell flat on the ground like a log. Lakshman recognized his loving cry and made obeisance, knowing that it must be Bharat. On the one hand he was moved by brotherly affection, but on the other was the stronger claim of obedience to his lord. Unable to embrace him, and yet loth to refrain; what poet could describe Lakshman's state of mind? Though obedience was the weightier, and therefore he stayed, he was like a child pulling against a kite high in the air. Bowing his head to the ground, he said affectionately: "It is Bharat, O Raghunáth, who greets you." On hearing this, Ráma started up in loving agitation, his robe flying in one direction and his quiver and bow and arrows in another.

Dohá 231.

Whether he would or no, the All-compassionate took and raised him up and clasped him to his bosom. Those who witnessed the meeting of Bharat and Ráma lost all self-consciousness.

Chaupái.

How can such an affectionate meeting be described? Their thoughts, words, and actions were beyond any poet. Both brothers

[1]The idea would seem to be that Ráma, though the benefactor of the whole world, was obliged in the forest to go armed, to protect himself against attack.

were filled with the utmost love; self, reason, knowledge, and understanding were all forgotten. Tell me who can pourtray such perfect love? by what shadow can the poet's mind attain to it? If the poet has a model, he can work out his meaning by the force of words, and players dance when they have an accompaniment; but the love of Ráma and Bharat is unapproachable, beyond the conception even of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; how then can I describe it? If an instrument is only strung with grass[1] can it make sweet music? When the gods saw the meeting of Bharat and Raghubar they were alarmed and trembled all over; but when Vrihaspati had spoken to them, they awoke from their folly and rained down flowers and applauded.

Dohá 232.

After affectionately embracing Satrughna, Ráma greeted the pilot; and then Lakshman too as a brother courteously greeted Bharat.

Chaupái.

When he had fondly embraced his younger brother, Lakshman next took the Nishád to his bosom. Then the two brothers, Bharat and Satrughna, after reverencing all the saints and joyfully receiving from them the desired blessing, in a rapture of love placed on their head the dust of Síta's lotus feet. As they again and again prostrated themselves, she raised them up, and with a touch of her lotus hands motioned them to be seated, in her heart invoking a blessing upon them, and so absorbed in affection as to lose all self-consciousness. When he saw Síta so thoroughly propitious, he became free from anxiety and all fear passed away. No one made any remark nor asked any question; the soul was so full of love that it ceased to act. Then the pilot took courage and bowing with clasped hands made humble petition:

Dohá 233.

"Distressed by your absence, my lord, there have come with the great sage your mothers and all the people of the city, your servants, captains, and ministers."

[1] I know no other instance of the use of the word *gádari* in the sense of 'grass,' which is the meaning that the best Hindu commentators give it here. It ordinarily means 'a sheep.'

Chaupái.

When the Ocean of amiability heard the *guru* had come, he left Satrughna with Síta and went off in haste that very minute, he Ráma, the steadfast, the righteous, the all-merciful. On seeing the *guru*, he and his brother were delighted and fell on their faces to the ground. The holy man ran and raised them up and embraced them, and greeted both brothers with the utmost affection. The pilot, quivering with emotion, gave his name and prostrated himself afar off; but the Rishi must needs greet him as a friend of Ráma's, as though love had been spilt upon the ground and he stooped to pick it up. Faith in Ráma is the root of all good; in heaven the gods applauding rained down flowers: "There is no one so utterly vile as he, nor any one in the world equal to the great Vasishtha:

Dohá 234.

yet the king of saints, on seeing him, was overjoyed and embraced him before Lakshman; so glorious in their manifestation are the effects of faith in Síta's lord."

Chaupái.

Finding all the people sad, Ráma, the all-merciful and all-wise God, gave every one his wish in the way he most desired: in an instant he and his brother embraced them all and at once removed the sore anguish of their pain. This was no such great thing for Ráma to do; similarly the sun is reflected in a thousand water-jars. All the citizens with rapturous affection embraced the pilot and praised his good fortune. Seeing his mothers as woe-begone as the sprays of some delicate creeper smitten by the frost, Ráma first of all saluted Kaikeyi, softening her will by his gentleness and piety. Falling at her feet, he soothed her with many words, attributing all the blame to Fate, Destiny, and Providence.

Dohá 235.

Raghubar embraced all his mothers and consoled them, saying: 'Mother, the world is subject to God; there is no one to blame.'

Chaupái.

The two brothers kissed the feet of their *guru's* wife, as also of the Bráhman ladies who had accompanied her, paying the same honour to them as to Ganga and Gauri; and they with gentle voice gladly gave them their blessing. When he embraced Sumitra, after clasping her feet, he was like a beggar who has picked up a fortune. Then both brothers fell at the feet of queen Kausalyá and their whole body was convulsed with love; the mother took them tenderly to her bosom and bathed them with tears of affection. How can any poet describe the mingled joy and grief of such a time, any more than a dumb man can express the sweetness that he tastes. After embracing their mother, Ráma and his brother requested the *guru* to accompany them, and at his command the citizens crossed over, admiring the scenery as they went.

Dohá 236.

Taking with them the Bráhmans, the minister, the queens, the *guru*, and some others chosen out of the people, Bharat, Lakshman, and Raghunáth proceeded to the holy hermitage.

Chaupái.

Síta came and embraced the saint's feet and received the precious blessing that her soul desired. The affectionate manner in which she greeted the *guru's* wife and the Bráhman ladies is beyond description. Again and again she kissed all their feet and received their benediction rejoicing her heart. When the queen-mothers looked at Síta, they closed their eyes and shuddered to see her so delicate, like some cygnet fallen into the clutch of a fowler; what a cruel thing God has done! As they gazed at her, they became distrest beyond measure, that she should have to bear all that Fate had put upon her. Then Janak's daughter summoning up courage, while her dark lotus eyes were suffused with tears, went and embraced all her mothers-in-law; at that moment Earth reeked with piteousness.

Dohá 237.

Again and again kissing all their feet, Síta most tenderly embraced them; and from their heart came the loving benediction 'May you long live a happy wife!'

Chaupái.

Síta and the queens being thus agitated by emotion, the learned *guru* bade them all be seated. First he expounded to them the instability of the world and spoke a little of the joys of heaven, and then announced the king's death. At the news Raghunáth was grievously distrest; thinking he had died out of love for him, the firmest of the firm was sore shaken. On hearing the sad tidings, which fell upon them like a thunderbolt, Lakshman, Síta, and all the queens broke out into lamentations, and the whole assembly was as much agitated as if the king had died only that very day. Then the great sage exhorted Ráma and directed him and all the people to bathe in the sacred stream. All that day the lord fasted even from water; and though the saint allowed them, no one else would drink either.

Dohá 238.

At daybreak, according to the order given him by the saint, the lord Raghunandan reverently and devoutly performed his father's funeral obsequies.

Chaupái.

Having celebrated every rite as prescribed in the Veda, he became pure, even he, the Sun to annihilate the night of sin, whose name is a fire that consumes the cotton of wickedness, and which if merely invoked is the source of all prosperity. He became pure, in like manner as, theologians say, a bather in the Ganges who invokes other *tiraths* is purified.[1] After his purification, when two days had passed, Ráma said affectionately to the *guru*: "My lord, all the people are much inconvenienced by having nothing to take but water and the wild produce of the woods. When I look at Bharat and his brothers, the minister, and all the queens, a minute seems to me like an age. Return, I pray, with all of them to the city: for you are here, the king is in heaven, and there is no one left at Ayodhya. I have said too much and have presumed greatly: but do, sir, as you think best."

[1]In the Ganges are concentrated the virtues of all holy places; any one who bathes in it is purified, and it is therefore a work of supererogation for him to invoke any other power. He cannot make himself cleaner than he had become already: nor could Ráma, the all-pure, become purer by any act of ceremonial purification.

Dohá 239.

" O Ráma, bulwark of righteousness, home of compassion, it is but natural for you to speak thus : the people are wearied, let them rest for two days and enjoy your presence."

Chaupái.

On hearing Ráma's words, the assembly was in dismay, like a ship tossed on the ocean ; but when they heard the saint's auspicious speech, it was as if the wind had turned in their favour. At the three set times they bathed in the sacred stream, the mere sight of which destroys any multitude of sins ; and ever feasting their eyes on the incarnation of blessedness, and again and again prostrating themselves before him, they looked and rejoiced. Then they went to see Ráma's hill and wood, where all was good, and nought evil : the torrents flowing with streams of nectar ; the air so soft, cool, and fragrant that it soothed every pain of mind or body ; the trees, creepers, and grasses of infinite variety ; the many kinds of fruits, flowers, and sprays; the magnificent rocks and the pleasant shade under the trees, all made the forest beautiful beyond description.

Dohá 240.

The ponds were gay with lotuses, the haunt of cooing waterfowl and buzzing bees, while forgetful of mutual antipathies, beasts roamed in the forest and birds of varied plumage.

Chaupái.

The Kols, Kiráts, and Bhíls, the inhabitants of the woods, brought delicious honey sweet as nectar, and piled up leafy bowls with herbs, roots, fruits, and flowers daintily arranged. With humble salutations they offered them to all, telling the taste, character, quality, and name of each. The people offered a liberal price, but they would not accept it, and begged them for Ráma's sake to take it back, saying in gentle tones in the depth of their affection : " The good accept what they know to be of love. You are holy, and we low Nisháds ; by Ráma's favour we have been admitted into your presence, an honour as difficult of attainment for us as for the

desert of Máru to be watered by the Ganges. Ráma is merciful and the Nisháds' patron; as is the king, so should be his family and subjects.

Dohá 241.

Consider this in your mind, and without more demur recognize our affection and make friends with us: accept these fruits and herbs and flowers and so render us happy.

Chaupái.

You have come to the forest as our welcome guests, though we are all unworthy to do you service. And what is it, sirs, that we offer you? Fuel and fodder are a Kirát's tokens of friendship, and our greatest service is not to steal and run off with your clothes and dishes. We are a rude people, often taking life, of vile nature and vile pursuits, low-minded and low-born, who day and night commit sin, without either clothes for the body or food to satisfy the belly: how could we possibly have ever dreamt of the knowledge of virtue, but for the effectual apparition of Ráma? Since we beheld our lord's lotus feet, our sore distress and sin have both been removed." On hearing this speech, the citizens were much affected and broke out into praises of their good fortune.

Chhand 10.

All began to praise their good fortune and addressed them in loving terms, being delighted to find in their speech and attitude such devotion to the feet of Síta and Ráma. Every one, man or woman, thought little of his own devotion, on hearing the language of the Kols and Bhíls; through the mercy of the jewel of Raghu's line (says Tulsi) a boat floats even though laden with iron.

Soratha 9.

Each day all the people roamed in as great delight through every part of the forest as the frogs and peacocks are invigorated by a shower at the beginning of the rains.

Chaupái.

The citizens of Ayodhya were so absorbed in excess of love that a day was gone in a minute. Síta, assuming as many forms as she had mothers-in-law, waited reverently upon them all with equal

attention. No one but Ráma noticed the miracle ; for Síta is the very power of Delusion, and he Delusion's lord. Síta won over all the queens by her services, and they being pleased gave her both instruction and benediction. Looking at Síta and the two noble brothers, the wicked queen repented bitterly ; and Kaikeyi now prays in her heart : " Is there no escape for me ? Does God refuse me even death ? as it is declared in the Vedas and by popular tradition, and as the poets also have sung, that if Ráma be against you, not even in hell can you find a resting place." Now this was the question in every one's mind : " Good God, will Ráma return to Avadh or not ?"

Dohá 242.

Bharat was so anxious and sorely perplext that he could neither sleep by night nor eat by day, like as a fish sunk in the last of the mud is in trouble about water.[1]

Chaupái.

" It was Fate in my mother's form that did me this injury, as when a rice field ripening for the harvest is smitten by hail. In what manner can Ráma's coronation be secured ? There is nothing now left for me to do. He would certainly return in obedience to an order of the *guru ;* but then the saint will only order what he knows Ráma to wish. At his mother's bidding, too, he would return, but Kausalyá would never insist upon anything. Of what account am I, who am only his vassal, and am fallen upon evil times, and have God against me ? If I resist him, it would be a grievous sin ; for the duty of a servant to his master outweighs Kailás." Without being able to settle a single plan in his mind, Bharat spent the whole night in thought. At daybreak he bathed, bowed his head to his lord, and was sitting down when he was sent for by the Rishi.

Dohá 243.

After saluting the *guru's* lotus feet and receiving his permission, he took his seat ; while all the Bráhmans, nobles, and ministers of state came and assembled in council.

[1]The fish thinks to himself, 'There is now only a little mud left in which I can just manage to live ; if that too dries up, what on earth am I to do for water ?' In like manner Bharat was thinking, ' The two days are now nearly over ; when they are gone, and I am left without Ráma, how shall I be able to survive ?'

Chaupái.

The great sage addressed them in words appropriate to the occasion: "Hearken, ye counsellors, and you, wise Bharat. The champion of righteousness, the sun of the solar race, king Ráma, the autocratic, the lord God, the ocean of truth, the protector, the bulwark of scripture, has taken birth for the benefit of the whole world. Obedient to the word of his *guru* and his father and mother; destroying the armies of the wicked and befriending the gods; in policy and devotion, in all things that pertain to this life or the next, there is no one equal to Ráma in the knowledge of what is right. Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva; the sun, the moon, the guardians of the spheres; Delusion, Life, Fate, and this Iron age; the sovereigns of hell, the sovereigns of earth, and all the powers that be; magic and sorcery, and every spell in the Vedas and the Tantras—ponder it in your heart and consider well—all are obedient to Ráma's commands.

Dohá 244.

If we observe Ráma's pleasure and commands, it will be well for us all; now, wise sirs, think it over, and all resolve to do whatever may be decided.

Chaupái.

Ráma's coronation will be agreeable to all, as a sure source of happiness and the one way to felicity. How is he to be brought back to Avadh? Think before you speak, and upon that plan we will act." All listened respectfully to Vasishtha's speech, full as it was of justice, religion, and worldly wisdom; but no answer was forthcoming; every one was dumb-founded, till with bowed head and clasped hands Bharat spoke: "In the solar race there have been many kings, each one greater than the other; all owed their birth to their parents, but their good or ill fortune was the gift of God. And, as all the world knows, it was through your blessing that they triumphed over sorrow and attained complete prosperity; whatever the course of fate that you, sir, marked out for them, none could alter it; it was fixed immoveably.

Dohá 245.

And yet now you ask advice of me: such is my ill fate." When the *guru* heard this affectionate speech, love sprung up in his heart.

Chaupái.

"My son, this is a true saying, it is all Ráma's mercy; without Ráma no one can ever dream of happiness. There is one way, my son, though I am ashamed to propose it; but a wise man will sacrifice the half when he sees the whole going; do you two brothers go into exile, then Lakshman, Síta, and Ráma will come back." On hearing this favourable speech, the two brothers rejoiced and their whole body thrilled with excitement; they were as pleased at heart and as radiant all over as if king Dasarath had been restored to life and Ráma were already enthroned. The people gained much and sacrificed little; but the queens all wept, for their pain was equal to their joy.[1] Said Bharat: "What the saint has proposed is already as good as done; he has granted me the one thing above all others that I most desired. I will stay all my life in the forest; there is nothing I should like better.

Dohá 246.

Ráma and Síta know my heart and you are full of knowledge and wisdom; if, my lord, you mean what you say, make your word good."

Chaupái.

Hearing Bharat's words and seeing his love, the saint and the whole assembly were transported out of themselves. Bharat's vast generosity was like a sheet of water and the saint's proposal like a woman standing on its brink, anxious to cross and trying different ways, but unable to find either ship, boat, or raft. Who can describe Bharat's magnanimity? Can the ocean be contained in a river-shell? The saint was inwardly at heart charmed with Bharat, and accompanied by the assembly went to Ráma. The lord saluted him and led him to a seat of honour; and on receiving the saint's permission all sat down. Then spoke Vasishtha in well-considered words, according to the circumstances of the place and time: "Hearken, Ráma; you are omniscient and wise, a store-house of piety, prudence, virtue, and intelligence;

Dohá 247.

you dwell in the hearts of all and know what they really wish or do not wish; now advise what will be best for your subjects, your mothers, and Bharat.

[1]For, though they recovered two of their sons, they lost the other two.

Chaupái.

A man in pain talks wildly, and a gambler watches only his own play."[1] On hearing the saint's speech, Raghurái replied: "My lord, the remedy is in your own hands. To attend to your wishes will be best for all. Only give the order, and cheerfully, I assure you, whatever your commands may be, for me in the first place, those instructions I will dutifully obey; and after me, as each has his orders, so will he do his service." Said the saint: "Ráma, you say truly; but Bharat's affection has disturbed calculation; therefore I say again and again my judgment is overcome by Bharat's piety; in my opinion, Siva be my witness, whatever will please Bharat is the best thing to be done.

Dohá 248.

Listen respectfully to Bharat's prayer; reconsider the matter; and after weighing well the duties of a king and the texts of Scripture, take the advice given you both by philosophers and men of the world."

Chaupái.

Seeing the *guru's* love for Bharat, Ráma's heart rejoiced exceedingly, for he knew Bharat to be a champion of righteousness, and in thought, word, and deed his own faithful servant. In obedience to the *guru's* commands, he made this sweet, gentle, and excellent reply: "I swear by you, my lord, and by my father's feet, that in all the world there has been no brother like Bharat. All who love the lotus feet of their *guru* are highly blessed; so say both the world and the Veda. But who can tell Bharat's blessedness, to whom such love has been shown by you? When I look at him, my younger brother, my senses are abashed, as I thus praise him to his face. Whatever Bharat says, that will be good for us to do." Having so said, Ráma remained silent.

Dohá 249.

Then the saint said to Bharat: "Put aside all diffidence, my son, and tell the ocean of mercy, your own dear brother, what you really have at heart."

[1]Therefore we come for advice to you, being too much excited and having too great a personal interest in the matter to judge for ourselves calmly and impartially.

Chaupái.

Hearing the saint's address, and having already received Ráma's consent, he was satisfied of the good-will both of his *guru* and his master; but seeing the weight of the whole business put upon his own head, he could say nothing and remained lost in thought, as he stood in the assembly, quivering all over his body, and his lotus eyes filled with the moisture of affection: "The king of saints has already spoken for me: what more is there for me to say? I know my lord's amiable disposition, that he never shows displeasure even to the guilty; and for me he has a special tenderness and love; even in play he never gave me an angry look. From a child I have never left him, and never at any time has he wounded my feelings. I have observed my lord's gracious ways; when beating me in any game he would allow me to win.

Dohá 250.

I am too much overcome by affection and modesty to say a word before him; to this day my eyes, thirsting for his love, have not been satiated with the sight of him.

Chaupái.

God could not endure my fondness, and has cruelly interposed an obstacle by means of my mother. In saying this now I do myself no honour. Who is made good by his own good estimation? To get into my mind that my mother is a wretch and I myself good and upright is a thousand times worse. Can rice be produced from stalks of *kodo*,[1] or the shells of a pond sweat pearls? Not a shadow of blame or wrong-doing attaches to any one; it is my ill-luck, like some fathomless ocean. Not perceiving that it is the fruit of my own sins, I revile my mother, to my own undoing. I search my heart, but am beaten all round. In one matter only am I really fortunate; with Vasishtha for my *guru* and Síta and Ráma for my masters, things must come right in the end.

Dohá 251.

In this honourable assemblage, in the presence of my lord and my *guru*, and in this holy place, I speak my true sentiments;

[1]The *kodo* (Sanskrit *kodrava*) is the *paspalum frumentaceum* or *scrobiculatum*, which bears a small grain of inferior quality, eaten only by the poor.

the saint and Ráma know whether my affection is sincere or feigned, and my words true or false.

Chaupái.

The whole world is witness to the king's death, the result of his uncompromising love, and to my mother's wickedness; the queens are so woe-begone that I cannot bear to look at them; the citizens are consumed by intolerable anguish; and I am the cause of all their troubles; and yet, though I hear and feel all this, I can still endure the torment. When I heard that Raghunáth had taken with him Lakshman and Síta and in pilgrim's weeds had set out for the woods, without shoes and walking on foot, be Sankara my witness, how I survived the misery. Again when I saw the Nishád's devotion, my heart must have been harder than adamant not to break. And now I have come and with my own eyes have seen everything; surely in this life my wretched soul has borne all that can be borne. The serpents and scorpions on the road at the sight of them forget their virulent venom and savage viciousness;

Dohá 252.

but to her Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta appeared as enemies; and how can God spare her son, or on whom would he rather inflict intolerable pain?"

Chaupái.

On hearing these lamentable words of Bharat's, fraught with distress and love, humility and discretion, the whole assembly was lost in sorrow and anxiety, as when the frost smites a bed of lotuses. The learned sage comforted Bharat by reference to various ancient legends, and Ráma, the moon of the lilies of the solar race, spoke thus in seemly wise: "Brother, grieve not your heart in vain; know that the ways of life are in God's hands. To my mind, brother, all the men of highest renown for virtue in all time, past, present, or future, and in the three spheres of creation, fall short of you. Whoever even imagines wickedness in you, shall perish both in this life and in the next. It is only fools, who have never studied in the school of philosophy and religion, who ascribe blame to yourmother.

Dohá 253.

Sin, Delusion, and the burden of every ill are destroyed by the invocation of your name, glory is won in this world and eternal happiness in the world to come.

Chaupái.

Be Siva my witness ; I state the fact truly : the world, Bharat, exists by your support. Do not, brother, entertain evil surmises to no purpose ; love and hatred cannot be hid ; birds and beasts come up close to a saint, but flee at the sight of a fowler, though he tries to stop them. If beasts and birds can distinguish between friends and enemies, how much more man, whose body is a vessel of virtue and intelligence. I know you thoroughly, brother ; how can I do anything that would be discordant with your spirit ? The king, to keep his word, abandoned me and, to keep his vow of love, discarded life ; if I now break his word, I shall be heartily grieved ; and yet my respect for you is greater ; the *guru* moreover has given me his commands ; in short, whatever you say, that I am ready to do.

Dohá 254.

Set your mind at ease ; cease this timidity and speak out ; I will do it at once." When they heard Ráma, the ocean of truth, speak thus, the assembly rejoiced.

Chaupái.

But the king of heaven and all the gods were alarmed and began to think 'Things will all go wrong.' Though they took counsel together, nothing came of it ; mentally[1] all had recourse to Ráma for protection. After again considering, they said to one another : 'Ráma is moved by the faith of the faithful.' Remembering the story of Ambarísha and Durvásas, Indra and the gods were greatly dejected. 'Long time the gods endured distress, till at last Prahlád revealed Narsinh.'[2] They beat their heads and whispered in the

[1]If they had gone to him in person their whole scheme would have been frustrated, for Ravan would have heard of it, and thus have become aware of Ráma's divinity.

[2]The legends of Ambarísha and Prahlád show how ready Vishnu (*i. e.* Ráma) has always been to hear the prayers of his followers, and how fierce is his indignation against those who persecute them ; it was therefore useless for the gods to think of opposing Bharat ; their only plan was to win him over to their side.

ear: "Now our only chance lies with Bharat; there is no other plan, sir, that I can see. Ráma accepts service done to one of his servants; do you all with loving heart do service to Bharat, and he will subdue Ráma to his own temper."

Dohá 255.

When the *guru* of the gods heard this their plan he said: "Well done, you are in great good fortune; devotion to Bharat's feet is the source of every good in the world.

Chaupái.

The service of the servant of Sita's lord is as good as a thousand Káma-dhenus. Now that you are resolved to put faith in Bharat, cease to have any anxiety; God has provided a way. See, Indra, the extent of Bharat's power; he has subdued Ráma with the greatest ease. Make your mind easy, sir; never fear, knowing that Bharat is Ráma's shadow." The Lord, who knows the heart, was disturbed when he heard the plans and fears of Vrihaspati and the other gods. Bharat, knowing that the whole responsibility rested upon him, was raising a thousand different arguments in his mind. After much deliberation, he came to the conclusion that his happiness consisted in obeying Ráma. "He is breaking his own vow in order to satisfy me, and in this is showing me no little love and affection.

Dohá 256.

Síta's lord has in every way done me great and unbounded favour." Then bowing low, and with his lotus hands clasped in supplication, Bharat thus spoke:

Chaupái.

"All-merciful and omniscient lord, what now can I say myself or have others to say for me? My *guru* is pleased and my master kind: the imaginary torments of my troubled soul are all over. I feared disgrace, but my fear was unreasonable; it is no fault of the sun's, sir, but a man may mistake the points of the compass.[1] My ill-luck, my mother's wickedness, God's adverse action, and

[1]Your mercy is as sure as the course of the sun; but even with the sun for his guide, a man may lose his way by mistaking the points of the compass; in like manner I was alarmed through my ignorance of the course that your mercy was taking.

the malignity of fate set themselves firm and combined to overthrow me; but the protector of the suppliants has maintained his character. This is no strange procedure of his it; is declared both by Scripture and tradition, and is no secret. The world is evil; the Lord only is good; tell me by whose goodness is he good save by his own? Your attributes, sire, are those of the tree of paradise, which is never either for or against any one in particular.

Dohá 257.

All who draw near and acknowledge that its shade relieves every sorrow, high or low, rich or poor, ask and obtain the fruit that they desire.

Chaupái.

Now that I have seen the affection of my *guru* and my master, my anxiety is gone: my mind is freed from doubt. Now, O mine of compassion, do whatever will be for the good of your servant, without being a trouble to the soul of my lord. The servant who worries his master and seeks only his own advantage is a base-minded varlet. A servant's gain is to do his master's service, to get him every comfort, and not be greedy. If my lord returns to Ayodhya, every one will be a gainer; but obedience to orders will be a thousand times greater gain; it is the highest good in this world, and in the next, the fruit of all well-doing and the ornament of beatitude. Listen, sire, to this my one request, and then do as you think proper. I have brought with me all the requisites for the coronation; if you approve, my lord, have them brought into use.

Dohá 258.

Send me and my brother into the woods and give the people back their king; or else let Lakshman and Satrughna return and let me accompany you;

Chaupái.

or all three brothers go into the woods, and only you and Síta return. O most merciful lord, do whatever is most pleasing to yourself. You have cast the whole burden upon me, sire, who am unversed both in politics and theology; I make all my proposals

on the ground of worldly interest; but when a man is in distress he cannot reason. A servant who hears his master's orders and answers him is one that Shame herself would be ashamed to look at: and yet, though I do this and am a fathomless ocean of faultiness, still my master in his kindness praises me as good. Now, O merciful one, that plan best pleases me which will cause my lord's soul the least vexation. By my lord's feet I swear that I speak the truth: there is only one scheme for securing the world's happiness;

Dohá 259.

if my lord cheerfully and without reserve will only give each one of us his orders, they will be reverently obeyed, and all this trouble and perplexity[1] will be at an end."

Chaupái.

On hearing Bharat's guileless speech the gods were glad of heart and extolled his generosity and rained down flowers; the people of Avadh were overwhelmed with uncertainty, and the hermits and all the dwellers in the woods were greatly rejoiced. Raghunáth maintained an anxious silence. Seeing his state, the whole assembly became disturbed. At that very moment arrived messengers from Janak.[2] Saint Vasishtha on hearing of it sent for them at once. They made obeisance and looked towards Ráma. At the sight of his attire they were exceedingly grieved. The great saint asked the embassy the news: 'Tell me, is all well with the king of Videha?' At this question the noble heralds with a deprecating air bowed their heads to the ground and with clasped hands replied: "Your courteous enquiry, sire, makes all well;

Dohá 260.

otherwise, my lord, welfare died with the king of Kosala; the whole world is in bereavement, but especially Mithilá and Avadh.

[1]*Avareva*, which I translate 'perplexity,' is explained by the Hindu commentators as meaning the same as *ghát* or *pench*. The word is not given in Dr. Fallon's or any other Hindustani-English Dictionary that I have seen. *Anat* is for *ánt*.

[2]Janak's visit and the long discussions that follow it, which occupy almost all the remainder of this book, are the invention of Tulsi Dás, and find no counterpart in the Sanskrit poem.

Chaupái.

When Janak and his court heard of king Dasarath's death, every one was mad with excess of grief. All who at that time saw Videha thought that name a truly appropriate one.[1] As he listened to the tale of the queen's wickedness, the monarch became as helpless as a serpent without its head-jewel. Bharat king, and Báma in exile! Janak's soul was sore distrest. He enquired of all his wise men and ministers, 'Consider and tell me what ought now to be done.' Reflecting on the state of Avadh and the double difficulty, if he went or if he stayed, no one gave any answer. After reasoning with himself, the king resolved to send four clever spies to Avadh to discover whether Bharat meant well or ill, and return in haste without being seen.

Dohá 261.

The spies went to Avadh, ascertained Bharat's movements and saw what he was doing, that he had started for Chitra-kút, and then went back to Tirhút.

Chaupái.

On their arrival, they announced in Janak's court to the best of their ability all Bharat's doings. The *guru*, the citizens, the ministers, and the king were all agitated with grief and love at the report. Restraining his emotion and glorifying Bharat, he summoned his warriors and captains,[2] and having stationed guards for the palace, city, and realm, and made ready horses, elephants, chariots and conveyances of every description, all in less than an hour, the king set out and has halted nowhere on the road, but this morning at daybreak bathed at Prayág. The host has begun to cross the Jamuná, and we, my lord, have been sent on ahead for news." So saying, they bowed their heads to the ground. The saint at once gave them an escort of six or seven Kiráts and allowed them to take leave.

[1] *Videha*, meaning literally 'out of the body,' and Janak being out of his mind, or beside himself, as we should say, for grief.

[2] *Sáhani*, which I translate 'captains,' is a word not given in any dictionary.

Dohá 262.

The people of Avadh were all delighted to hear of Janak's arrival ; but Raghunandan was greatly disquieted and Indra overwhelmed with alarm :

Chaupái.

the wicked Kaikeyi was sinking with remorse, 'to whom shall I be able to speak or whom can I blame ?' while the people were delighted with the thought that now they had got another day or two to stay. In this manner the day was spent. On the morrow all bathed and after their ablutions worshipped Ganes, Gauri, Siva, and the Sun ; then reverenced the feet of Lakshman's lord, and offered up their prayers, the men[1] raising their joined hands, the women holding out the skirt of their dress : "With Ráma our king and Jánaki our queen, may Avadh, our capital, the centre of all delights, be gloriously re-peopled, court and all, and Ráma install Bharat as heir-apparent. Revive us all, O lord, with this ambrosial bliss and grant the world its life's desire.

Dohá 263.

May Ráma sway the state, assisted by his *guru*, the council, and his brothers ; and may we die with Ráma still Avadh's king." This was the universal prayer.

Chaupái.

When they heard the citizens' loving words, the wisest saints thought little of their own penance and austerities. When the people had in this manner performed their daily devotions, with much joy they went and saluted Ráma. High and low, and of middle estate, men and women, all looked up to him as their own special patron, and he discreetly received them all with due honour. Every one extolled his inexhaustible generosity : "From a child it was said of Raghubar that he cherishes all, in whom he recognizes sincerity and affection ; with his bright face, bright eyes, and guileless ways, he is a very ocean of amiability and gentleness." Thus affectionately telling Ráma's good qualities, all began to

[1]That is to say, in the attitude of beggars ; the women holding out the skirt of their dress to catch whatever may be thrown into it, the men holding out their hands.

magnify their own good fortune. "There are few people in the world, who can have been so meritorious as we, whom Ráma has thus accepted for his own."

Dohá 264.

At the time when all were thus absorbed in love, they heard of the approach of the king of Mithilá ; the sun of the lotuses of the solar race rose in haste, he and the whole assembly.

Chaupái.

Raghunáth led the way, accompanied by his brothers, the *guru*, the minister, and the people. As soon as king Janak saw the holy hill he dismounted from his chariot and saluted it. In their eagerness and excitement to see Ráma, no one felt the slightest fatigue from the toilsome journey, for their soul was with Ráma and Síta; and who without a soul can be conscious of bodily pain or pleasure? In this manner Janak and his host advanced, drunken with the drunkenness of love. When they came near and in sight, they lovingly and reverentially began mutual salutations. Janak kissed the feet of the hermits, and Ráma with his brothers having first reverenced the king's spiritual advisers, embraced him, and led the way for him and his army.

Dohá 265.

Ráma conducted the host to the hermitage as it were a river of pitifulness flowing into an ocean full of the pure water of tranquillity ;

Chaupái.

flooding the banks of wisdom and asceticism ; with sorrowful speeches for its tributary streams and torrents ; with sighs and lamentations for the wind and waves that break the stout trees of Resolution on its bank ; with grievous anguish for its rapid current, and terror and delusion for its many eddies and whirlpools ; with sages for ferrymen and wisdom for the huge boat, which can no how be got across ; while the poor Kols and Kiráts of the woods are the forlorn travellers wearied with waiting. When it reached the hermitage, it was as though ocean had been agitated with a sudden rush of waters. The two royal hosts were so overcome with

grief that they had no sense, courage, or shame left. Extolling king Dasarath's majesty, virtue, and amiability, they sorrowed like men drowned in a sea of sorrow.

Chhand 11.

Drowned in a sea of sorrow, they sorrowed, men and women alike, in utter bewilderment, all angrily and reproachfully exclaiming 'What is this that cruel fate has done?' Gods, saints, anchorites, ascetics, and sages witnessed Janak's condition, but his love—says Tulsi—was like a broad river that no one could get over.

Soratha 10.

When all the people and the great sages had exhausted every topic of consolation, Vasishtha thus addrest Videha: "King of men, be comforted.

Chaupái.

By the sun of your wisdom the darkness of the world is dispelled, and in the light of your speech saints expand like the lotus; how then can the power of delusion affect you? This is the marvellous result of love for Síta and Ráma. There are three classes of beings, whom the Vedas term wise in their generation, the sensual, the sorcerer, and the saint; amongst the pious the highest honour is for him whose soul is full of love for Ráma: but without knowledge love for Ráma is imperfect, like a boat without a helmsman." When the saint had finished his exhortation to the king, all the people bathed at the Rámghát. Every one, men and women alike, were so agitated with grief that they spent the day without drinking water; even the cattle, birds, and deer would eat nothing; much less would his own kindred think of doing so.

Dohá 266.

At daybreak the royal son of Nimi[1] and the royal son of Raghu having bathed with all their retinue went and sat under the *bar* tree, sad at heart and wasted in body.

Chaupái.

The Bráhmans from Ayodhya, as also those from the capital of the king of Mithilá; Vasishtha, the *guru* of the solar race, and

[1] *Nimi* was a former king of Videha and one of Janak's ancestors.

Satánand, Janak's family priest, who while on earth had explored the path of heaven, began long exhortations full of religion, morality, asceticism, and philosophy. Then Visvamitra eloquently admonished the assembly with many a reference to ancient legend ; till Raghunáth suggested to him : "Sire, every one since yesterday has gone without water." Said the saint : "Ráma has spoken in season ; two and a half watches of the day are now spent." Understanding the saint's pleasure the king of Tirhut replied : "It is not good for us to eat bread here."[1] The king's word pleased every one, and having obtained his permission they went to bathe.

Dohá 267.

At that very moment arrived the people of the woods, bringing large baskets laden with fruits, flowers, leaves and roots of every description.

Chaupái.

By Ráma's favour the mountain had become a granter of desires: merely to look at it removed sorrow. The ponds, streams, and glades were bursting as it were with joy and love ; all the creepers and trees broke out into blossom and fruit ; the birds and beasts made a most melodious concert. In short, the gladsomeness of the forest was surpassing ; the air, soft, cool, and fragrant, was delightful to every one ; and the beauty of the scene was beyond description, as though Earth herself had prepared Janak's reception. When each and all of the people had finished bathing and had received permission from Ráma, Janak, and the saint, they gazed with rapture on the magnificent trees and threw themselves down here and there : while leaves and fruits, flowers and roots of every kind, fresh and fair, and sweet as nectar,

Dohá 268.

were courteously sent to all, in baskets full, by Ráma's *guru;* on which they made their repast, after reverencing their ancestors, the gods, their guests, and the *guru.*

[1] This refers to the custom which forbids a Hindu ever to take food in the house of his son-in-law.

Chaupái.

In this manner four days were spent, in which the people saw Ráma and were happy. In both camps there was this desire at heart: "It is not good for us to return without Síta and Ráma. Life in the woods in their society is a thousand times better than heaven. If any one, in his longing for home, would desert Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta, his fate is an unlucky one: it is the height of good fortune for us all to dwell in the forest near Ráma, bathing three times a day in the Mandákini, seeing Ráma, which will be a constant delight, rambling about on the sacred hill and among the hermitages in the wood, and feeding on sweet herbs and roots and fruits, so contentedly that the fourteen years will pass like a minute, without our knowing how they go.

Dohá 269.

We are not worthy of so great happiness" they all exclaimed. "What luck can be like it?" Such was the spontaneous devotion to Ráma's feet in both camps.

Chaupái.

In this manner as all were expressing their heart's desire in affectionate words, which it ravished the soul to hear, Síta's mother sent a handmaid, who ascertained that it was a convenient time and returned. On learning that Síta's mothers-in-law were at leisure, Janak's queen and her attendants came to visit them. Kausalyá received them with due honour, and gave them such seats as circumstances allowed. On both sides there was such love and tenderness, that the most rigid thunderbolt would have melted, could it have seen and heard. Their body quivering and unnerved, their eyes full of tears, and all lost in grief, they drew lines with their toes on the ground, each a separate incarnation of love to Síta and Ráma, or as it were tearful Sympathy repeated in many forms. Said Síta's mother: "God's judgment has gone astray, using the thunderbolt as a chisel to break up foam!

Dohá 270.

We hear of ambrosia, but see only venom; all his doings are hard; crows, owls, and cranes are everywhere, but swans only in the inaccessible Mánas lake."

Chaupái.

Upon this, queen Sumitrá said sadly: "God's ways are contrary and unaccountable. He creates and cherishes, and then destroys: his purposes are as idle as child's play." Said Kausalyá: "It is no one's fault; pain and pleasure, loss and gain are governed by actions; the effects of action are inscrutable; God only knows them, who awards its own fruit to every act, whether it be good or bad. The Lord's decree dominates over all, whether for rising, staying, or falling, whether for poison or ambrosia. It is vain, madam, to give way to sorrow; God's schemes are, as I have said, unchangeable and from everlasting. Consider the question of the king's life or death; look now, friend, and think whether it was a loss to him or a gain." Síta's mother replied: "Noblest of noble women, consort of Avadh's king, your eloquent words are true.

Dohá 271.

If Lakshman, Ráma, and Síta stay in exile, all will be right in the end and no harm done." "But" (said Kausalyá with a troubled heart) "I am anxious about Bharat.

Chaupái.

By God's favour and your blessing, my son and his wife[1] are both pure as Ganges water. Though I have never yet sworn by Ráma, I now invoke him to witness, friend, that I speak truly. The greatness of Bharat's generosity, goodness, and humility, his brotherly affection, faith, hope, and charity, even Sarasvati's eloquence would fail to declare; can the ocean be ladled out with a shell? I have always known that Bharat was the glory of his house, and the king repeatedly told me so. Gold is known by assay and precious stones by the test; a man's temper is tried by fortune. It is not right for me now to have spoken thus; but sorrow and love have left me little reason." On hearing these words, as pure as Ganges stream, all the queens were overcome with emotion.

[1]For *suta-badhú*, 'a son's wife,' it might be better to read *su-bandhú*, 'a good brother.'

Dohá 272.

Kausalyá continued : " Hearken to me, queen of Mithilá, and take courage. Who is able to advise you, the consort of the wisest of men ?

Chaupái.

Having found a fitting opportunity, speak, madam, to the king, as if of yourself, and suggest that he should stop Lakshman and let Bharat go to the forest. If the king agrees to this proposal, I will then devise and carry out some proper plan. I am greatly disturbed about Bharat, for his love is so profound that if he stays I surmise evil." When they saw her generosity and heard her frank appeal, they were all overpowered with sympathy. There was a shower of flowers from heaven with cries of Glory, Glory ; saints, ascetics, and sages grew faint with love. The queens, despite their fatigue, still looked and waited ; till Sumitrá made bold to say : " Madam, nearly an hour of the night is gone." At this Kausalyá rose and affectionately

Dohá 273.

said, " Pray return at once to your tent ; of a truth now our help is in God and the king of Mithilá."

Chaupái.

Seeing her affection and hearing her modest speech, Janak's queen clasped her holy feet : " Madam, this modesty on your part is only natural, since you are Dasarath's wife and Ráma's mother. Monarchs give honour to the lowest of their servants ; in the same way as fire tops itself with smoke and a hill with grass. King Janak is your servant in thought, word, and deed, and Mahádev and Bhaváni are your constant auxiliaries. Who is there on earth who can act as your supplement ? Does the sun shine by the help of a torch ? After going into exile and assisting the gods, Ráma will hold undisputed sway at Ayodhya. Through the might of his arm, gods, serpents, and men will all dwell in peace, each in his own place. This has all been foretold by Yajnavalkya ; and the words of a saint, madam, can never be false."

Dohá 274.

So saying, she fell at her feet and affectionately made request for Síta ; permission was accorded and Síta set out with her mother.

Chaupái.

Síta embraced all her old domestics in such manner as in each case was most befitting. When they saw her in hermit's dress, they were all distrest with exceeding sorrow. Janak, on receiving the permission of Ráma and the *guru*, came to the tent to see his daughter, and clasped her to his bosom, the sanctifying guest of the soul of love. His bosom swelled with a flood of affection and his royal soul resembled Prayág ; with his love for Síta conspicuous as the spreading *bar* tree, on which devotion to Ráma appeared like the child, clutched for support by the king's bewildered senses as by the sage Chiranjív when on the point of drowning.[1] Videha was so overwhelmed by his feelings that he had no sense left ; such is the power of love for Síta and Raghubar.

Dohá 275.

Síta could not bear to see her father and mother so overcome by affection, but calling to mind both the time and her own duty, Earth's daughter summoned up courage.

Chaupái.

When Janak looked at her in her anchorite's dress, he was filled with love and consolation : " Daughter, you have sanctified both families ; everybody in the world proclaims your brilliant renown. The stream of your fame excels the Ganges and has spread over millions of universes. The Ganges has only three great sites[2] on earth, but the congregations of saints that have been made by you are innumerable." At her father's sincere and loving eloquence Síta was abashed and shrank into herself. Again her father and mother took her to their arms and gave her kind instructions and invoked rich blessings upon her. Síta could not speak out, but

[1]The sage Márkandeya had the presumption to ask Nárâyan to show him a specimen of his delusive power. The god in answer to his prayer drowned the whole world in a sudden flood. Only the Akhaybat, or imperishable fig-tree at Prayág, raised its head above the waters, with a little child seated on one of its topmost boughs, that put out its hand and rescued the terrified saint as he was on the point of sinking.

[2]These are Hari-dwár, Prayág, and Ságar.

was anxious at heart, "It is not well for me to spend the night here." The queen saw her wish and explained it to the king, inwardly praising the excellence of her disposition.

Dohá 276.

After again and again embracing her, they graciously gave her leave to depart. Having now an excellent opportunity, the discreet queen adroitly mentioned Bharat's going.

Chaupái.

When the king heard of Bharat's conduct, brilliant as gold, refreshing as sweet perfumes, consolatory as ambrosia or the soft light of the moon, he closed his tearful eyes and his body thrilled with rapture, as he broke out into ecstatic praises of his glory. "Mark me well, fair-faced and bright-eyed dame, the legend of Bharat is effectual to loosen the bands of existence. According to my ability, I too have mastered somewhat of theology, state craft, and spiritual meditation; but whatever my ability, if I would tell Bharat's greatness, I cannot make a pretence of reaching even its shadow. Brahma, Ganes, Seshnág, Siva, Sarasvati, the inspired poets and the sages most renowned for wisdom, when they hear or meditate upon Bharat's doings, his glory, his vigour, his piety, his temper, his virtues, and his spotless dignity, all are enraptured; it has a flavour of purity like the Ganges, surpassing ambrosia.

Dohá 277.

His perfection is limitless; he is the incomparable protoplasm; I know none like Bharat but himself. Can Mount Meru be weighed in any balance? The wit of the whole race of poets is at fault.

Chaupái.

He is, fair dame, as impossible to describe as it is impossible for a fish to walk on dry land. Hearken, lady; Ráma knows, but even he cannot describe Bharat's illimitable greatness. If Lakshman returns and Bharat goes to the forest, every one will imagine it to be good for all; but, madam, Bharat's love and confidence in Ráma are past all telling. Bharat is the perfection of love and

devoted attachment, but Ráma is the lord of impartiality. Bharat's mind has never even dreamt of all the felicities of this world and the next; only his love for Ráma's feet has brought him success. This, as I consider, is Bharat's belief.

Dohá 278.

He would never be beguiled into thwarting an order of Ráma's; do not then in your affection give way to sorrow:" said the king, and sighed as he spoke.

Chaupái.

As the wedded pair thus affectionately discoursed of Bharat's excellencies, the night passed like a minute. At daybreak both the royal camps awoke and bathed and worshipped the gods. After bathing Ráma approached his *guru*, embraced his feet, and on receiving permission spoke thus: "My lord, Bharat and the people and my mothers are distrest and inconvenienced by their sojourn in the woods. The king of Mithilá too and his retinue have been enduring hardships for many days; be pleased to do, my lord, as seems to you good; the happiness of all is in your hands." So saying, Ráma was greatly abashed. The saint thrilled with delight on seeing his amiable disposition. "Without you, Ráma, the greatest bliss would seem to both camps like hell.

Dohá 279.

O Ráma, you are the soul of their soul, the life of their life, the joy of their joy. Any one, my son, who would desert you for the sake of the pleasures of home has destiny against him.

Chaupái.

Perish the happiness, life, and religion in which is no love for Ráma's lotus feet! That piety be impiety, and wisdom unwisdom, in which love for Ráma is not supreme! Through you men are made happy, and without you they are unhappy; you know the heart of every one. Your commands rule all; and every motion is thoroughly manifest to your benignity. Return now to the hermitage." The king of saints was overpowered with love. When Ráma had bowed and retired, the *guru* composed himself and went to Janak, and repeated to him what Ráma had said, enlarging upon

his amiability, affection, and excellent disposition: "Now, sire, do whatever will be for the advantage of all, without prejudice to religion.

Dohá 280.

O king of men, you are the wisest among the most wise, the champion of true piety; who save you can at this time end these troubles?"

Chaupái.

Janak was so moved by the saint's address and by the sight of his agitation that all his philosophy and asceticism were forgotten. Faint with love, he reasoned to himself: "I have not done well in coming here. Dasarath ordered Ráma into exile, but himself gave the best proof of his affection; I have now sent him from one wood to another and return in triumph forsooth with increased reputation for wisdom." Seeing the agitation of the anchorites, saints, and Bráhmans, the king was still more overcome with emotion; but considering the circumstances he made an effort, and with his retinue set forth to visit Bharat. Bharat advanced to meet him and gave him the best seat the times allowed. "Son Bharat," said the king of Tirhut, "you are well acquainted with Ráma's character.

Dohá 281.

He is devoted to truth, a zealot in religion; out of kindness, he endures inconvenience without murmuring; but if you have any orders to give, speak."

Chaupái.

At this Bharat's whole frame quivered and his eyes filled with tears; but putting a strong restraint upon himself he replied: "My lord, I love and revere you as my father, and hold you as dear as my own family *guru;* father and mother I have none. Here are Visvamitra and the other sages, and all this assembly; you too yourself, an ocean of wisdom; I am your obedient son and servant; regard me in this light, my lord, and instruct me. In this assembly and at this holy place you enquire of me, and I am to answer, though besmirched of soul and demented. Can I speak

great words out of my little mouth? Pardon me, father; the fates are against me. It is declared in the Vedas, Tantras, and Puránas, and all the world knows, that loyal service is difficult. Duty to a master conflicts with self-interest; the deaf and blind cannot show their love.

Dohá 282.

Have regard to Ráma's wishes, so pious as he is, and remember that I am but a servant; do as all approve and as will be best for all, but forget not their love."

Chaupái.

When the king heard Bharat's speech and witnessed his generosity, he and his court burst out into praises. Simple but profound; soft and delicate but severe; pregnant with meaning in a small compass; his speech was as mysterious as the shadow of a face in a glass, which no hand can grasp. The king, Bharat, the saint, and all the venerable assembly went to Ráma, by whom the gods were made as glad as the lilies by the moon. On hearing the news, all the people were as distrest as fish in unaccustomed waters. The gods, seeing first the emotion of the family *guru*, and then Janak's exceeding affection, and Bharat so full of devotion to Ráma, were sorely anxious and began to despond in their selfishness. The sight of Ráma's kindness made the company of heaven unspeakably dismayed.

Dohá 283.

Indra cried sadly: "Ráma is overcome by love and modesty; we must combine to devise some scheme, or else we shall be undone."

Chaupái.

The gods invoked Sáradá in flattering terms: "Protect, O goddess, the gods your suppliants. Exert your power of delusion and change Bharat's purpose; by some deceptive artifice rescue the host of heaven." When the wise goddess heard their prayer, she understood their stupid selfishness and said: "You tell me to change Bharat's purpose; you have a thousand eyes and yet cannot see Mount Meru. The delusive power of Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva

is exceeding great, but it cannot see through Bharat's purpose; and yet you tell me to pervert it. What! can the moonlight rob the moon? Bharat's heart is inhabited by Síta and Ráma; can darkness invade the splendour of the sun?" So saying, Sáradá withdrew to Brahma's heaven, and the gods were as downcast as the *koka* at the approach of night.

Dohá 284.

The self-seeking gods were troubled at heart and devised evil projects and schemes, creating by strong delusion artifices of fear, error, sorrow, and vexation.

Chaupái.

Indra practised this villainy, thinking "Success or defeat is all in Bharat's hands." When Janak approached Ráma, the glory of Raghu's line received them all with honour. Then spoke Vasishtha in terms appropriate to the time, the assembly, and the principles of religion, mentioning the conversation between Janak and Bharat, and eloquently repeating all that Bharat had urged. "Son Ráma, any order that you may give, all will obey; this is my conclusion." Upon this Raghunáth, clasping his hands, made truthful and guileless reply in gentle tones: "In the presence of yourself, sir, and the king of Mithilá, for me to speak is altogether out of place. Whatever command you may be pleased to give, I swear by yourself, I am ready to comply."

Dohá 285.

On hearing Ráma's oath, the saint and Janak and the whole assembly were confounded; all fixed their eyes on Bharat's face helplessly and without power to answer.

Chaupái.

Bharat saw the distress of the assembly, and being Ráma's brother, put a strong restraint upon himself. Seeing the unfitness of the time, he subdued his emotion, in the same way as Agastya bowed down the Vindhya mountains.[1] Grief like Hiranyáksha

[1] Agastya is said to have compelled the Vindhya mountains to prostrate themselves before him; and when once down, they were never able to rise again. This he did to oblige the sun, who found the range so high that he could with difficulty climb it in his daily passage from east to west.

carried away his soul as it were the Earth ; but at once from his spotless perfection like the womb of the universe came forth the mighty Boar[1] of Discretion and wrought immediate deliverance. Clasping his hands, he bowed reverentially to all, to Ráma, the king, the *guru*, and the saints : " Pardon me, if to-day I act most unbecomingly and with the tongue of a child speak stubborn words." As he mentally invoked the gracious Sáradá, from the depths of his soul there came to his lotus mouth a swan-like strain fraught with pure intelligence, piety, and justice.

Dohá 286.

With the eyes of his mind, Bharat saw that the assembly was faint with love ; bowing low and invoking Síta and Ráma, he thus spoke :

Chaupái.

" My lord is my father and mother, my friend, my *guru*, and my master; object of my adoration, my best benefactor, the reader of my heart ; the kindest of patrons, the perfection of amiability, the protector of the humble ; the all-learned, the all-wise ; the powerful befriender of suppliants ; quick to appreciate merit and to ignore demerit and wickedness ; my sovereign, my god-like God; while no servant can be so bad as I am. In my infatuation I have come here at the head of an army, in defiance of the commands of my lord and my father. In the world there are good and vile, high and low, ambrosia and heaven, poison and death ; but never have I seen or heard of any one, who even in thought could cancel an order of Ráma's. Yet I have been thus contumacious, and my lord in his kindness has taken it as service.

Dohá 287.

Out of his own mercy and goodness he has made me good ; my errors have become adornments and my fair fame has been spread all around.

Chaupái.

Your mode of procedure, your gracious speech, and generosity are known throughout the world ; they are sung in the Vedas and

[1]The allusion is to the third Avatár, when Vishnu in the form of a Boar rescued the earth, which had been seized by the demon Hiranyáksha and carried off into the depths of the ocean.

Tantras. The cruel, the perverse, the vile, the low-minded, the outcast, the base, the ill-conditioned, the godless, the reckless, so soon as you hear that they have come before you as suppliants and have made a single prostration, are all reckoned as friends. Though you see faults, you never take them to heart; and if you but hear of virtues, you proclaim them in the assembly of the saints. What other master is there so kind to his servants, so perfect in all points, who never dreams of reckoning up what he has done himself, and is heartily vexed at any embarrassment of his servants. He is my sovereign lord, and there is none other, with arms upraised, I declare on oath. A beast may dance and a parrot be a clever talker; but all depends upon the music of the dancing-master and the method of the teacher,

Dohá 288.

who now has corrected his servant and treated him with honour, and made him the crown of the head of the just. Who is there, save the all-merciful, who, whether we will or no, maintains our fair fame?

Chaupái.

Whether it was from grief and affection or from mere childishness that I came here in despite of your commands, you in your compassion have looked upon me as a friend and in every way taken it in good part. Seeing your blessed feet and knowing my lord's natural benignity, I look upon this great assembly as a piece of good fortune, and my great sin as evidence of my lord's kindness;[1] for by his gracious favour he has satisfied my whole being and his compassion has exceeded everything. Out of the goodness of his own disposition my good lord has made sure of my fidelity. I have now displayed great audacity in discarding respect for this august assembly and speaking boldly or humbly, just as the fancy moved me; but pardon me, sire, for I am in grievous perplexity.

[1]The meaning would seem to be: the greater my sin, the greater his kindness in forgiving it; and the greater the assembly, the greater my glory in having so many witnesses to his love.

Dohá 289.

It is a great mistake to say too much to a true friend or really wise man or good master. Be pleased, sire, to give your commands and set me all right.

Chaupái.

I swear by the dust of my lord's lotus feet, the glorious consummation of truth, virtue, and happiness; with an oath I protest that the desire of my soul, whether waking, sleeping, or dreaming, is to serve my lord with spontaneous devotion, without any regard to self-interest, fraud, or my own ends in this life or the next. There is no duty so imperative as submission; let your servant, sire, obtain this favour."[1] So saying, he was utterly overwhelmed with emotion; his body quivered, his eyes filled with tears, and in great agitation he clasped his lord's lotus feet. So pathetic a scene defies description. The Ocean of compassion honoured him with gracious words and took him by the hand and seated him by his side; while himself and all the assembly were faint with love, after hearing Bharat's prayer and seeing his noble nature.

Chhand 12.

Raghurán himself, the august assembly, the saint, the king of Mithilá, all were faint with love, and mentally applauded the exceeding greatness of Bharat's brotherly affection and devotedness. The gods too commended Bharat and rained down flowers, though with a heavy heart. Every one, says Tulsi, was as distrest by what he had heard, as the lotus that withers at the approach of night.

Soratha 11.

Seeing every man and woman in both assemblies so grieved and downcast, Indra,[2] vile wretch, still sought his own happiness, killing as it were the already dead.

[1]That is to say, favour him with some order that he may show how good a servant he is by his immediate submission to it.

[2]Though Tulsi Dás constantly appeals to the authority of the Vedas, it is clear that like 999 out of 1,000 of the most educated of his countrymen at the present day, he had not the faintest idea of their contents; otherwise he would not have spoken thus disrespectfully of Indra, who is one of the principal Vedic divinities,

Chaupái.

Though king of the gods, there is no limit to his deceitfulness and villainy; he loves another's loss and his own gain; Pákaripu's[1] ways are like those of a crow—crafty, disreputable, and with no faith in any one. Having in the first instance formed an evil design and accumulated deceits, he piled up trouble on the heads of all. Every one was infatuated by the god's delusive power; their love for Ráma was so violent that they would not be separated from him. They were all distracted; with nothing settled in their mind; at one moment longing for the woods, at another anxious to return home. The people in their distress had the current of their ideas as divided as the water at the confluence of a river with the sea. Thus wavering in mind they got no comfort in any quarter; no one told another his secret thoughts. Seeing this, the Ocean of compassion smiled to himself and said: "Indra is like a dog in his ways."

Dohá 290.

Excepting Bharat, Janak, the saints, the ministers, and the more intelligent nobles, the heaven-sent delusion took effect upon all, according to the circumstances of the individual.

Chaupái.

The Ocean of compassion saw the people distrest by their love and by Indra's potent deception; the assembly, the king, the *guru*,

while Siva whom he places in a much higher sphere and regards as one of the manifestations of the Supreme Spirit—while Indra and the others are mere demi-gods—is a power for whose cultus the Vedas, though searched from beginning to end, would fail to supply any authority. If a Bráhman were now to set up a temple at Mathurá or Banáras to Indra, or Mitra, or Varuna, or any other Vedic divinity, he would be thought as eccentric as an Englishman who should re-dedicate a shrine to Diana in the precincts of St. Paul's churchyard in the city of London. Perhaps more so; for the characters of the old Greek and Roman Pantheon are still thoroughly familiar to modern Europeans and have a considerable influence upon art and literature; while the Vedic mythologyhas utterly perished, and scarcely a single name in it would be recognized by any native of India except a professed Pandit. Nor is this very surprising, inasmuch as the Vedas were not really composed by Hindus, nor have Hindus in any past time ever adopted them as a religious standard. To regard them in that light now is—as the founders of the Brahma Samáj soon discovered—an impracticable absurdity. Dating from a time when neither Englishman nor Hindu had yet come into existence, they are the common inheritance of all nations of Aryan descent. Their intrinsic value is *nil*; the only interest they possess is due to the fact that they are the sole surviving record of the first semi-inarticulate utterances of nascent humanity.

[1] *Pákaripu*, 'Paká's enemy, is one of Indra's names, in consequence of his having destroyed a demon called Páka.

the Brahmans, and the ministers, all with their hearts under the spell of Bharat's devotion; motionless as pictures, gazing upon Ráma, nervously uttering words which they seemed to have learnt by rote. The eulogy of Bharat's affection, and constant humility is delightful to hear, but difficult to pronounce. Seeing only the tiniest morsel of his devotion, the saints and the king of Mithilá were absorbed in love; how then can I, Tulsi, tell all its greatness? It is only by the blessing of faith that the ambitious design of my heart has prospered. I am little; I know the enormous greatness of my subject, and I shrink in confusion before a crowd of other poets; unable to utter the vehemence of my passionate love for his perfection, the motions of my fancy are like the stammerings of a child.[1]

Dohá 291.

Bharat's bright fame is as the bright moon rising in the bright sky of a faithful heart, ever intently watched by my daring fancy as by an unfledged partridge.

Chaupái.

Bharat's generosity is scarce fathomable by the Vedas; pardon, ye poets, the frivolities of my poor wit. Who, that hears or tells of Bharat's perfect nature, does not become enamoured of the feet of Síta and Ráma? Whoever invokes Bharat and still finds love for Ráma a difficult matter is a monster without a parallel. Seeing the state that every one was in, the merciful and all-wise Ráma, who knew their devotion to him, being the staunch champion of religion, a master of policy, an ocean of truth and love and amiability and everything good, having considered the place and circumstances, the time and assembly, Raghuráj, the maintainer of justice and affection, delivered a speech, the quintessence of eloquence, grateful as ambrosia at the time of hearing, and salutary also in the end: "Brother Bharat, you are the champion of righteousness, perfectly conversant with all the laws of the world and the Veda;

[1]Most readers of the original will agree with the poet that his powers of expression have here been scarcely adequate to the intensity of his feelings. All this part of the poem abounds with obscure and involved passages, the precise interpretation of which is often very difficult to determine, and I cannot flatter myself that I have invariably succeeded in hitting upon it.

Dohá 292.

for purity of thought, word, and act, your only equal, brother, is yourself. In this venerable assembly and in such distressing circumstances how can all the virtues of my younger brother be told?

Chaupái.

Brother, you know the custom of the solar race and the renown and the affection of our father, that ocean of truth; the circumstances of the time and of this assembly, the reverence due to these venerable personages, and the secret thoughts of all men, whether they be indifferent, or friends or unfriends, are understood by you, as also your own highest gain and mine, and the requirements of religion. I have entire confidence in you, and yet I speak as the circumstances suggest. My words, brother, in the absence of my father, have been kept straight only by the favour of our *guru;* otherwise all my subjects, together with the citizens, the people of the palace, and myself, would have been undone. If the lord of day sets at the wrong time, tell me, will not the whole world be in confusion? Such trouble, brother, fate had ordained; but the saint and the king of Mithilá have averted it.

Dohá 293.

The State; our honour and fair name; Religion; our land, wealth, and homes; all have been defended by the power of the *guru;* and everything will be well in the end.

Chaupái.

My followers and yours, the palace and the forest, are both protected by his favour. The order of a father or mother, a *guru* or a master, is like Seshnág, the supporter of a whole world of righteousness. Obey it yourself, brother, and let me obey it, and thus become the protector of all the solar race. Obedience is the one means for the attainment of every success, a triple flood of Glory, Salvation, and Power. Having thus reflected, endure the grievous burden and make your people and family happy. I have distributed my afflictions amongst you all; but upon you is the full weight of the greatest difficulty. I know your tenderness, though

I speak so harshly ; the times, brother, are out of joint ; the fault is not mine. In an emergency a brother is used as a shield in the same way as the stroke of a sword is parried by the hand."

Dohá 294.

A servant is like a hand, or foot, or eye ; a master is like the head. Hearing this description of love, says Tulsi, the greatest poets are full of admiration.

Chaupái.

When they heard Raghubar's speech, imbued as it were with the nectar of an ocean of tenderness, the whole assembly became lost in an overpowering trance of love. Sáradá herself was struck dumb at the sight of them. Bharat was immensely consoled by the graciousness of his lord and his putting away of every trouble and wrong-doing. Cheerful of aspect and with the grief of his soul effaced, he seemed like a dumb man who has received the gift of speech. Affectionately bowing again and again and folding his lotus hands, he thus spoke : " My lord, I am as happy as if I had gone with you ; I have reaped the reward of being born into the world. Now, O merciful sire, whatever may be your order, that will I dutifully and reverently obey. But, sire, grant me some support, by the help of which I may struggle on to the end of the time.

Dohá 295.

In compliance with the *guru's* commands, sire, I have brought here water from all holy places for the purpose of your royal inauguration : what are your orders concerning it ?

Chaupái.

I have one great desire at heart, but for fear and shame I cannot tell it." " Tell me what it is, brother." Upon this his lord's command, he replied in affectionate and winning terms : " With your permission I would go and see Chitra-kút with all its hermitages, shrines and woods, its birds and beasts, its ponds and streams, its waterfalls and rocks, and the spot[1] so

[1]One of the temples at Chitra-kút bears the name of Charan-páduka, and has been erected over a rock which is said to bear the impression of Ráma's foot. Supposing there were any truth in the legend, it would seem rather from the name that it ought to commemorate the place where Ráma gave Bharat his sandals.

specially marked with the prints of my lord's feet." "Certainly, brother; only obtain Atri's permission, and then wander without fear through the woods. It is the saint's blessing, brother, that makes the forest so auspicious, holy, and exquisitely beautiful. Whatever the place that the king of sages may direct, there deposit the holy water." On hearing his lord's words, Bharat was glad and joyfully bowed his head to the saint's lotus feet.

Dohá 296.

The selfish gods, when they heard this most delightful conversation between Bharat and Ráma, praised the whole family, and rapturously showered down flowers upon them.

Chaupái.

"Blessed be Bharat and glory to our lord Ráma," cried the gods in their irrepressible delight. The saint, the king of Mithilá, and every one in the assembly rejoiced on hearing Bharat's speech. King Videha broke out into ecstatic praises of the many virtues and the affection both of Bharat and Ráma; master and servant of equally charming disposition, their fidelity and love the purest of the pure. The ministers too and all the spectators affectionately extolled them, as each best could. In both camps there was blended joy and sorrow, when they heard the conversation between Ráma, Bharat, and the saint. Ráma's mother, feeling pleasure and pain equally balanced, exhorted the queens, reckoning up both good and evil. One would magnify Ráma, another would praise Bharat's amiability.

Dohá 297.

Then said Atri to Bharat: "There is a fine well near the hill; there deposit the holy water, pure, unsullied, incomparable."

Chaupái.

On receiving Atri's command, Bharat despatched all the water vessels, and himself with Satrughna, the saint and the elders, went to the deep well.[1] There he poured out the holy water on that sacred spot; and Atri in a rapture of affection thus spoke: "Son,

[1] Válmíki makes no mention of this well. Under the name of 'the Bharat-kúp,' it is now one of the seven principal stations visited by the pilgrims to Chitra-kút.

this has been a holy place from all eternity; but time had obscured it, and it was known to no one, till my servants, seeing the spot to be a desirable one, made this great well for the sake of a good supply of water. By the decree of fate the whole universe has been benefited; and a merit most difficult to compass has been rendered easy. People will now call it Bharat's well, hallowed in a special degree by the combination in it of the water of all holy places. Every one, who lovingly and religiously bathes in it, will be made pure in thought, word, and act."

Dohá 298.

All then went to Raghunáth, telling the virtue of the well; and Atri explained to him the blessed efficacy of holy places.

Chaupái.

The night was pleasantly spent in loving discourse on matters of religion and sacred legends until it was dawn. After performing their daily duties, Bharat and his brother, having received permission from Ráma and Saint Atri, attended by all their retinue in simple attire, proceeded on foot to visit Ráma's wood. Earth, in confusion of heart at being trodden by their delicate and unshod feet, smoothened herself, and cleared away all the spiky grass and thorns and stones and ruts, and everything rough and unpleasant. Earth made the way delightfully easy for them; they were refreshed by soft,-cool, and fragrant breezes; the gods rained down flowers; the clouds afforded shade; the trees gave blossom and fruit; the grass made a soft carpet; the deer with their timid glances, and the birds with their sweet song, all recognized Ráma's friends and did them homage.

Dohá 299.

And what great matter is this for Bharat, Ráma's dearest friend? when any ordinary person finds the highest success easy of attainment, if he only repeats Ráma's name when he yawns.

Chaupái.

In this manner Bharat roamed the woods, and the saints, who saw his faith and love, were abashed. Seeing all so divine, he

asked about the sacred ponds and various localities, the birds and deer, the trees and grasses, the hills, woods and orchards, beautiful and varied, and pre-eminently holy; and in reply the great saint with gladness of heart gave him the history of each, with its name, virtue, and spiritual efficacy. Bathing at one place, prostrating himself at another; here admiring the beauty of the wood, here sitting down to rest as the saint directed, he meditated on Sita and the two brothers. Seeing the goodness of his disposition, his love and faithfulness in service, the gods of the wood were charmed and gave him their blessing. The third watch of the day was half spent when he returned to gaze upon the lotus feet of his lord.

Dohá 300.

In five days Bharat visited every shrine and holy place. The day was spent in discourse on the glory of Hari and Hara until the evening.

Chaupái.

On the morrow after bathing the whole assembly was gathered together—Bharat, the Bráhmans, and the king of Tirhút. Ráma knew at heart that the day was an auspicious one, but in his kindness hesitated to say so. He looked at the *guru*, the king, Bharat, and the assembly, and then in confusion turned his eyes to the ground. All the spectators admired his generosity, thinking 'Never was there a master so considerate as Ráma is!' Bharat in his wisdom understood Ráma's wish. He stood up and, lovingly putting the greatest restraint upon himself, bowed low, and with clasped hands thus spoke: "My lord has granted my every desire. For me he has borne every affliction, and has himself experienced every kind of trouble. Now, sire, give me your royal permission to go and serve at Avadh till the appointed time.

Dohá 301.

But, O merciful and compassionate king of Kosala, teach me some way by which your servant may see your feet again when the time is over.

Chaupái.

Your citizens, your kinsmen, and all your subjects, sire, are true and leal, and bound to you by ties of affection. The sorrows of this miserable life, borne by your command, are a delight; without my lord, highest heaven is a worthless gain. The all-wise master knows the fancies, the desires, the habit of mind of all his servants; the protector of suppliants will be our protector, and both in this world and the next will secure our deliverance. I have thus the most perfect confidence; not a particle of anxiety disturbs my calculations. My own distress and my lord's forbearance have combined to make me thus presumptuous. Pardon, my lord, this my great offence, and shrink not from instructing your servant what to do." All who heard Bharat's prayer applauded it; like a swan it had separated the milk of truth from the water of error.

Dohá 302.

The all-wise Ráma, the brother of the meek, on hearing his brother's meek and guileless speech, replied in terms appropriate to the place, the circumstances, and the time:

Chaupái.

"The *guru* and the king, brother, take thought for you, for me, and our people, whether at home or in the forest. So long as Visvamitra, Vasishtha, and Janak direct us, neither you nor I can dream of trouble. For us two brothers, both for me and you, obedience to our father's command is the highest object we can have, our greatest gain, our glory, our duty, and our salvation. A king's good is a good thing both in the Veda and in the estimation of the world. Whoever observes the injunctions of *guru*, or father and mother, or master, treads an easy path and never stumbles. Remember this, and putting aside all regrets, go and reign at Avadh for the appointed time. The burden of the realm, the treasury, the people, and the family will weigh no heavier than the dust of the *guru's* feet. Observe the instructions of the saint, your mother, and the minister, and protect your country, your subjects, and your capital."

Dohá 303.

A chief should be like the mouth, which alone (says Tulsi) does all the eating and drinking, and yet supports and nourishes to a nicety each separate member of the body.

Chaupái.

A king's duty includes everything, in the same way as every latent desire exists potentially in the mind. In various ways he consoled his brother; but without some memento his mind would not be satisfied nor at rest. The *guru*, the minister, and the whole assembly were like-minded with Bharat; and Ráma, overpowered with modesty and affection, took compassion upon him and gave him his sandals, which Bharat reverently received and placed upon his head. Not these the mere foot-gear of the All-merciful, but rather twin guardians of his people's life; a casket to contain the jewel of Bharat's love; the two letters[1] of the alphabet for which the soul struggles; the folding-doors that guard the house; the hands for holy work; the pure eyes of service and righteousness. Bharat was as glad to receive this memento as if Ráma and Sita had themselves stayed.

Dohá 304.

As he bowed and begged permission to depart, Ráma took and clasped him to his bosom. Wicked Indra finding a sad opportunity made the people weary.

Chaupái.

But his villainy was a good thing for all; the hope that the time of exile would soon be over was the life of their life. Otherwise the separation from Lakshman, Sita, and Ráma would have been such a blow that all would have died of it. The mercy of Ráma solved this difficulty, and the hostile gods became serviceable allies. Ráma closed his arms around Bharat with a burst of affection that cannot be described. Body, soul, and speech overflowed with love; the firmest of the firm lost all firmness, and his lotus eyes streamed with tears. The assembled gods were grieved to see his condition; the saints and *gurus* who were as firm as Janak, the gold of whose

[1]The two letters are the two consonants in the name of Ráma; for a panegyric on which see Vol. I., page 17.

soul had been tested by the fire of wisdom, and whom the Creator had created as unimpressionable by the world as the leaves of the lotus by the water;

Dohá 305.

even they, seeing the unparalleled and boundless affection of Ráma and Bharat, were overwhelmed in body, soul, and speech, and lost all reason and restraint.

Chaupái.

If Janak and Vasishtha were dumb-founded, the emotion of ordinary persons is not worth speaking about. People would think any poet harsh when they heard him describe the parting of Ráma and Bharat; Eloquence herself, remembering the unspeakable pathos of the scene, would be struck dumb with confusion. Raghubar first embraced and consoled Bharat and then rejoiced to take Satrughna to his arms. Knowing Bharat's wishes, his servants and ministers began each to set about his own work. In both camps there was sore distress at the news, as they commenced their preparations for the march. The two brothers, after reverencing their lord's lotus feet and submissively receiving his commands, set out on the way, bowing to the saints, the hermits, and forest gods, and again and again showing them respect.

Dohá 306.

Lakshman, too, they embraced, and making obeisance, placed on their head the dust of Síta's feet, and received her affectionate blessing, the source of happiness.

Chaupái.

Ráma and his brother bowed the head to the king with many expressions of modesty and praise: "In your kindness, sire, you have suffered great inconvenience, you and your retinue, by coming to the forest; now grant me your blessing and return to the city." The monarch mastered his emotion and went. After reverencing the saints, Bráhmans and nobles, and taking leave of them as though they were the equals of Hari and Hara, the two brothers approached their mother-in-law, and came back after kissing her feet and obtaining her blessing. Then they took leave of Visvamitra,

Vámadeva, and Jábáli ;[1] the people of the court, the citizens, the good ministers and all, with courteous speech and address, as was most befitting. The Ocean of compassion respectfully dismissed them all, men and women, high, middle-class, and low.

Dohá 307.

With sincere affection the lord kissed the feet of Bharat's mother and embraced her, and escorting her to the pálki that he had in readiness, effaced all her alarm and distress.

Chaupái.

After saluting her father and mother and the court, Síta came back purified by the love of her beloved. Reverently she embraced all her mothers-in-law with an affection which the poet's soul shrinks from describing. Hearkening to their instructions and receiving the blessing she desired of them, Síta stood burdened with conflicting love. Having sent for elegant pálkis. Ráma with words of consolation escorted each of his mothers to their carriage. Again and again both brothers embraced them and led each by the hand with equal affection. When the horses, elephants, and different vehicles were ready, the king and Bharat started the host. Their hearts full of Ráma, Síta, and Lakshman, all the people went disconsolate; even the bullocks, horses, elephants, and cattle were out of heart, and went only by force and against their will.

Dohá 308.

The lord with Síta and Lakshman kissed the feet of the *guru* and the *guru's* wife, and turned and came back to their leafy hut with mingled pleasure and amazement.

Chaupái.

The Nishád was dismissed with honour and departed; sorely grieved at heart to leave. The Kols, Kiráts, and Bhíls, the people of the woods, turned again and again, after they had been dismissed, to make yet one more obeisance. The lord with Síta and Lakshman sat under the shade of the fig tree and sorrowed for the loss

[1] In the Sanskrit Rámáyana Jábáli is represented as being, or professing to be, an atheist. In this character he alone openly advised Ráma to return to Ayodhya as king ; for, as there was no life after death, the wisest plan was to get as much enjoyment as possible out of the present life while it lasted.

of their dear friends. Ráma, overpowered with affection, discoursed to his spouse and brother in eloquent terms on Bharat's love and generosity, and with his own blessed mouth declared that faith and devotion were in his every thought, word, and deed. At that time the birds, deer, and fish, every creature at Chitra-kút, whether animate or inanimate, were all woe-begone. The gods, seeing Raghubar's state, rained down flowers and told him of what was doing in their several spheres. The lord bowed and reassured them; they went away glad, without a particle of anxiety in their mind.

Dohá 309.

With Síta and his brother the lord shone forth in the leafy hut as resplendent as Faith, Wisdom, and Asceticism incarnate.

Chaupái.

Vasishtha, the Bráhmans and Visvamitra, Bharat and the king were all in evil case at leaving Ráma, and paced the road in silence, counting up in their mind all Ráma's virtues. After crossing the Jamuná they passed that whole day without food. The next day they crossed the Ganges, where Ráma's friend made every arrangement for them. Then they crossed the Sai, bathed in the Gomati, and on the fourth day reached Ayodhyá. Janak stayed four days in the city, settled the entire administration of the state, committed the government to the minister, the *guru*, and Bharat, and then with all his retinue set out for Tirhút. All the people, in compliance with the *guru's* directions, settled down quietly in Ráma's capital,

Dohá 310.

fasting and praying to see him once again, discarding all personal adornments, pleasure and enjoyment, and living only in the hope of his return.

Chaupái.

Bharat exhorted his ministers and trusty servants, and they executed his orders, each in their appointed sphere. Then he spoke and gave instructions to his younger brother, and entrusted to him the care of the dowager queens. He also with folded hands spoke to the Bráhmans, bowing low and using humble supplication: "Give your orders and hesitate not, to high or to low, in great matters or

in small." Next he summoned the people of the palace, of the city, and all his subjects, and set their minds at rest and appointed them places to live in. After this he, with his brother, went to the *guru's* house, and after prostrating himself and joining his hands in prayer said thus: "With your permission I will now live a life of penance." The saint thrilled with rapturous affection and replied: "Whatever you think, or say, or do, is always best."

Dohá 311.

On receiving his commands and his blessing he sent for a great astrologer and fixed the day, and then devoutly placed upon the throne his lord's sandals.

Chaupái.

After bowing his head at the feet of Ráma's mother and the *guru*, and receiving the commands of his lord's sandals, the champion of righteousness made for himself a hut of leaves at Nandigráma,[1] and there abode, with his hair gathered up into a knot on his head, attired in hermit's dress, and his couch of grass spread in a hole in the ground, lovingly practising the austerities of religious life in food, dress, posture, fasting and prayer; discarding in thought, word, and deed, as of no more value than a broken blade of grass, all clothes and adornments and every luxury and enjoyment. The city of heaven envied the capital of Avadh, and the god of riches was confounded at the sight of Dasarath's wealth; yet in that city Bharat dwelt as indifferent as a bee in a garden of *champa* trees.[2] The man so highly blest, who is enamoured of Ráma, spurns like vomit all Lakshmi's delights.

Dohá 312.

This is no such great achievement for Bharat, the very shrine of the love of Ráma; even the *chátak* and the swan are models in their way, the one of marvellous constancy, the other of discrimination.

[1]Nandigráma, now contracted to Nandgánw, is a few miles from Ayodhyá.

[2]Though the *champa* bears a very sweet-scented flower, it is said that no bee ever sucks it.

Chaupái.

Day by day his body grew thinner, but his lustre and vigour were not diminished, and the beauty of his face remained the same. Nourished by an ever-increasing devotion, his virtue waxed stronger, and his soul was unclouded ; as the waters decrease in the brightness of the autumn, but the reeds spring up and the lotuses blossom. His tranquillity, self-control, piety, fasting and prayer were like stars in the pure heaven of Bharat's soul ; his faith like the pole-star, the return from exile as the full-moon, his constant remembrance of the lord as the glistening milky-way, his devotion a fixed and unsullied moon shining ever clear amidst a galaxy of stars. All the greatest of poets would fail to describe Bharat's composure, wisdom and magnanimity, his faith, his impassibility, and the perfect splendour of his virtues ; not even Seshnág, Ganes, and Sarasvati could attain to them.

Dohá 313.

Paying daily homage to his lord's sandals, his affection was greater than his heart could contain ; he constantly referred to them in the disposal of all matters of state,

Chaupái.

his body quivering with emotion, Síta and Ráma in his heart, their names upon his tongue, and with tears in his eyes. Ráma, Lakshman, and Síta dwelt in the forest, but Bharat dwelling in the palace endured the bodily penance. Every one after considering both sides said that Bharat was in every way praiseworthy. The religious were abashed who heard of his fasting and penance ; the king of saints, who saw his condition, was put to shame. Bharat's mode of life was utterly holy, sweet and charming, and the cause of every blessing ; it removes the grievous distresses of this sinful age ; is the sun to disperse the darkness of the great delusion ; the lion to quell the elephant host of sin ; the pacifier of every kind of affliction ; the joy of the faithful ; the liberator from the burden of existence ; the essence of the ambrosia of Ráma's love.

Chhand 13.

If Bharat had never been born, full of the ambrosia of devotion to Ráma and Síta, who would have practised such self-restraint and penance, such composure, patience, and rigorous fasting, transcending every imagination of the saints? Who in legendary disguise would have removed our burning sorrows and poverty, our arrogance and sin? What poor wretch like Tulsi now in this iron age would have ventured to set Ráma before you?

Sorathá 12.

All, says Tulsi, who make a vow and listen with reverence to Bharat's acts, shall assuredly acquire a great devotion to the feet of Síta and Ráma and a distaste for the pleasures of life.

[*Thus endeth the book entitled* AYODHYÁ, *composed by Tulsi Dás for the bestowal of pure wisdom and continence; being the second descent 'into the holy lake of Ráma's deeds,' that cleanses from every defilement of the world.*]

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